



Hafa Adai!

Guam reports 3 COVID-19-related fatalities, 71 new cases. **PAGE 2**
Torres removes Towai as defendant in complaint vs JGO. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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COVID-SAFE GAME

A golfer scopes out his next shot at the Kingfisher Golf Links. Kingfisher is currently open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 6:30am to 6pm on weekends.
JOSHUA SANTOS

WITH 4 NEW DEATHS

A deadly start to 2022

The CNMI had its deadliest week yet with the COVID-19 pandemic, recording four successive deaths that raised the CNMI pandemic death toll from 14 last Jan. 1, 2022, to 18 as of yesterday.

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. first confirmed the CNMI's 15th,

16th, and 17th COVID-19-related deaths in a news release late Jan. 2, 2022, and the 18th fatality yesterday morning. CHCC will soon be releasing more information of the latest fatalities.

See DEADLY on Page 4

A staff member from the National Health Organisation (EODY) prepares a booster Johnson and Johnson vaccine against COVID-19 at Karatepe refugee camp, on the northeastern Aegean island of Lesbos, Greece, Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021.

AP



By LAURAN NEERGAARD and CARLA K. JOHNSON
AP MEDICAL WRITERS

Pandemics do eventually end, even if omicron

is complicating the question of when this one will. But it won't be like flipping a light switch: The world will have to learn to coexist with a
See OMICRON on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:10pm, Jan. 3, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **95.2%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	36,763
Fully Vaccinated:	34,991
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,280
Fully Vaccinated:	4,920
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,117

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,618	71	19,689
Recovered	18,972	34	19,006
Active	339	71	410
Deaths	270	3	273

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	3,287	10	3,297
Traced via Travel Screening	319	1	320
Traced via Community Screening	2,968	9	2,977
Deaths	14	4	18

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

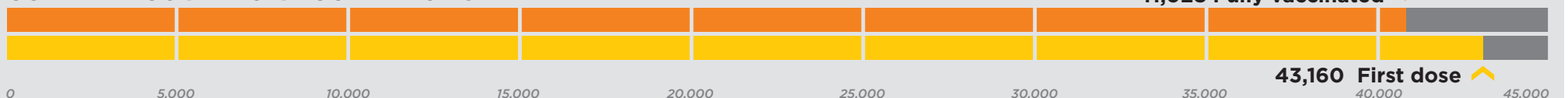
COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE



BUSINESS

2021 saw one of the largest multibillion-dollar gifts to philanthropy in more than a decade.

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NATION

Search teams look for two missing in the smoldering debris from a Colorado wildfire.

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LIFE & STYLE

A New York resident who was stumped by a "Jeopardy" question gets a do-over.

PAGE X



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GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Guam reports 3 COVID-19-related fatalities, 71 new cases

The Joint Information Center of Guam was notified yesterday of three COVID-19-related fatalities, all three being vaccinated, raising to 273 Guam's death toll from the pandemic.

The 271st COVID-19-re-

lated fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Dec. 24, 2021. The patient was a 76-year-old female, vaccinated with underlying health conditions. She tested positive on Dec. 24, 2021.

The 272nd COVID-19-related fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Regional Medical City on Dec. 31, 2021. The patient was a 58-year-old male, vaccinated. He tested positive on Dec. 31, 2021.

The 273rd COVID-19-re-

lated fatality occurred at GMH on Jan. 1, 2022. The patient was a 47-year-old female, vaccinated with underlying health conditions. She tested positive on Jan. 2, 2022.

In a statement on the JIC news release, Guam Gov. Lou

Leon Guerrero said: "[First gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Guam Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio], and I offer our prayers and send our sympathies to the families of the recently departed. With each passing, we are reminded once again about how precious life is and how in a moment's notice it can all be taken away. Show your loved ones how much you love them every chance you get. Let's lift each other up as we look toward a new year and hope for brighter days ahead."

In the same news release, it said the Department of Public Health and Social Services reported seven new cases of COVID-19 from 267 specimens analyzed on Jan. 2, 2022. An additional 64 cases

were also reported yesterday as a result of complete analysis and case submissions from other clinics for preliminary COVID-19 test results reported January 1-2, 2022. Official case counts for the past week-end results are as follows:

■ 64 of 578 test positive for COVID-19 (11 cases previously reported on Jan. 1, 2022). Eight cases were identified through contact tracing.

■ 11 of 54 test positive for COVID-19 (no cases previously reported on Jan. 2, 2022).

To date, there have been a total of 19,689 officially reported cases in Guam, 273 deaths, 410 cases in active isolation, and 19,006 not in active isolation. The CAR Score is 9.0. (Saipan Tribune)



TOYS FOR TOTS

Just before Christmas, Dec. 23, 2021, first lady Diann delivered over 100 gifts to the U.S. Army Reserves Center for distribution to the children of our troops as part of the U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots program.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Bill seeks to exempt some homestead structures from DPL liability for encroaching on public land

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan) has introduced a bill that seeks to exempt village and agricultural homestead structures erected from January 1985 to January 2000 from Department of Public Lands penalties for encroachment on public lands.

Flores stated in the bill that currently as it stands, DPL has come across heavy fire in relation to homeowners encroaching on public lands and not being in compliance with the rules and regulation under the DPL's administrative code.

He said when found in violation for encroachment by

DPL enforcement officers, homeowners are given a fine or would have to break down the existing structure to avoid any further scrutiny or fines.

Flores' House Bill 22-89 seeks to amend the law to exempt from liability village and agricultural homestead structures existing from January 1985 to January 2000 that are encroaching on public land.

DPL was empowered to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the purpose of the Homestead Waiver Act.

The lawmaker said Public Law 15-2 required that DPL "assess the demand for homesteads and develop a program for meeting that need, to the extent practicable, within the available land base."

\$4.1M in Guam tax refunds released this week

HAGÁTÑA, Guam—Continuing their commitment to the timely payment of income tax refunds, the Leon Guerrero-Tenorio Administration announced yesterday the latest batch release of tax refund payments totaling \$4,176,178, including refund garnishments. This represents the payment of 389 error-free returns filed on or before Dec. 15, 2021.

Since 2019, the Department of Revenue and Taxation and the Department of Administration have been working to ensure refunds are processed and paid on a consistent, expedient basis.

"In the new year, we continue to honor our fiscal discipline and build our financial ability by paying tax refunds at a historic rate," said Go. Lou Leon Guerrero. "These taxpayer dollars

belong in the hands of our people, and we are proud to provide them this spending power to build their own momentum as we move forward as a community."

"With schools back in session and fresh resolutions, our administration was adamant about empowering our families financially as we entered 2022," said Lt. Gov. Josh Tenorio. "With the timely processing of refunds in a matter of weeks, we continue to make progress that earnestly sets the standard for future administrations."

To check the status of your income tax refund and other payments processed by DRT, log onto your account at myguamtax.com and use the LookupStatus tools or call 635-1840/1841/7614/7651/1813 or e-mail pinadmin@revtax.guam.gov. (PR)

#RISINGUPTOTHECHALLENGE

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THE
GREATEST
GIFTS YOU
CAN GIVE
IS YOUR
TIME.

Author: Abhishek Tiwary

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or email: info.northernmarianas2022@gmail.com



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Torres removes Towai as defendant in complaint vs JGO

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The Office of the Governor and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has filed an amendment to his initial complaint against the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental

Atalig retains Gregory as his counsel in JGO probe

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig has retained Matthew Gregory as his counsel and for the department in the hearing of the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, which is investigating Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry last week, Atalig said he hired Gregory to ensure that he is within a lot of the rules and regulations the Department of Finance has to follow up.

"Just to ensure that I relay the proper information that the JGO would like to hear," he said.

The secretary said he has not received any communica-

Operations Committee to remove House sergeant-at-arms Pedro Towai as a defendant in the lawsuit.

The amended complaint was filed in Superior Court yesterday by Torres' lawyers Joseph E. Horey and Gilbert Birnrich. Aside from the

tion from the JGO committee as to his schedule to testify. He said he just saw on the newspaper (*Saipan Tribune*) that the JGO still wants him on standby, so to speak.

The government is paying the attorney's fees for Atalig, along with that of Torres and other witnesses.

Atalig said he has to prepare a report on how much the government is paying or about to pay in attorneys' fees to other lawyers who represented witnesses from the Department of Public Safety and Department of Finance.

Last week, JGO committee chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) stated that they are not done yet with their investigation as they have yet to call in Atalig to testify. Babauta said they still have an outstanding subpoena for Atalig.



Gregory

removal of Towai as a defendant in his capacity as house sergeant-at-arms, the lawsuit against the JGO Committee remains the same.

In addition to the amended complaint, Horey and Birnrich also issued an amended summons, giving the JGO committee 14 days to respond to Torres' complaint.

"If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this amended summons, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the amended complaint," the summons stated.

Last month, Torres and the Office of the Governor filed its lawsuit against the JGO committee over its decision to hold him in contempt. Torres wants the Superior Court to declare that the JGO Committee's subpoena served on the gov-

ernor is invalid and unlawful.

Torres stated in his complaint that he is suing the JGO committee for violation of Commonwealth statute in issuing the subpoena, infringement upon the testimonial immunity conferred on him by the Commonwealth Constitution, lacking valid legislative purpose in violation of the Commonwealth Constitution, and usurping responsibilities constitutionally delegated to other executive offices in violation of the Commonwealth Constitution.

As relief, Torres has asked the court to quash the subpoena and stop the committee from enforcing it.

In addition, Torres demanded payment of costs incurred in filing the lawsuit.

Immediately after filing his suit, all five Superior Court Judges recused themselves from hearing Torres' suit. Supreme Court Chief Justice Al-

xandro Castro then issued an order appointing former Superior Court associate judge

Timothy Bellas to serve in the matter pro tempore, or for the time being.

Camacho's co-defendant pleads not guilty

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One of Rep. Vicente Camacho's (D-Saipan) co-defendants in an assault case has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him.

Tiepo A. Nikiti, 21, one of the men who allegedly helped Camacho assault another man last October 2021, pleaded not guilty before Superior Court presiding judge Roberto Naraja.

The judge ordered Nikiti, who appeared out of custody, to return for a status conference on Feb. 1, at 1:30pm before Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Similar the Precinct 3 representative, Nikiti has also been charged with assault and battery and disturbing the peace for allegedly assaulting Steven Koch last Oct. 29, on Freedom Drive, Chinatown.

According to the official charging documents filed in court, Nikiti is one of the men accused of helping Camacho assault Koch while he was on a walk with his daughter on the evening of Oct. 29.

The other individual who was also accused of assault-

ing Koch is reported to be a 14-year-old juvenile.

Camacho, 60, was arrested by the Department of Public Safety on the evening of Nov. 2, 2021, but he immediately posted \$1,250 cash bail and is out of custody.

Due to the alleged assault, Koch reportedly suffered abrasions, bruising, and pain on his head and body from the blows, and was taken to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for examination.

On Nov. 1, Koch, his wife and daughter asked the Superior Court to issue a temporary restraining order prohibiting Camacho, Nikiti, Ignacio "Ike" S. Concepcion and Fiel Reynaldo Ortiz from engaging in any further physical harm, disturbance, harassment, blocking, threats and verbal abuse.

On Nov. 12, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho found cause for domestic violence, and issued a temporary restraining order and one-year protective order against Camacho, Nikiti, Concepcion, and Ortiz.

The assault incident is believed to have stemmed from a longstanding animosity between Koch and his brother-in-law, Concepcion.

Small craft advisory until Friday

A small craft advisory is now in effect until 6pm Friday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, northeast winds 15 to 25 knots with gusts up to 30 knots and seas of 8 to 10 feet will be present in Marianas

coastal waters until 6pm Friday. Winds will briefly decrease below advisory levels of 15 to 20 knots tonight before increasing again Wednesday.

Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in these hazardous conditions. **(PR)**



NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 504880 Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No.: (670) 323.6601
Procurement Office

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP-NMTI/2022-001

Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility

The Commonwealth of the Northern Marian Islands (CNMI) is soliciting proposals from qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for the design and construction management (CM) for the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility (NMTI) on the island of Saipan. The Facility will be located in Koblerville, Saipan as indicated on the attached Site Plan (Attachment A). This project is being funded by a grant from the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

This solicitation is in accordance with CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAC § 70-30.3-305. To also include provisions of CNMI Procurement Regulations, NMIAC Section §70-30.3-725 prohibiting kickbacks and gratuities, NMIAC Section §70-30.3-730 prohibition against contingent fees shall apply.

All firms submitting their RFPs may be considered as a Registered A&E firm with the CNMI pursuant to NMIAC § 70-30.3-250.

All firms must have or obtain a valid Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Board of Professional Licensing. Information in obtaining a COA may be requested from the CNMI Board of Professional Licensing.

A pre-proposal meeting will be held on December 28, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Video Communication. Interested firms will be provided the video teleconference link. Firms are requested to submit a notice of their intent to participate in the pre-proposal meeting one (1) day before the meeting via email at: admin@nmtechcnmi.org. Attendance is not mandatory, but is recommended.

Inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing on or before December 21, 2021, no later than 9:00 a.m. via email to Ms. Jodina Attao, CEO at: admin@nmtechcnmi.org.

Sealed proposals for this project shall be submitted with one (1) original and four (4) copies to the NMTI Procurement Officer located at the NMTI campus, Lowerbase, Saipan, MP-96950 no later than **4:00pm, local time, Chamorro Standard Time, 01/18/2022 and must be marked "Proposal - Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility NMTI-2022/RFP-001."** Questions regarding this solicitation should be directed to Ms. Jodina Attao, by email only at admin@nmtechcnmi.org. Electronic submissions may be accepted if approved prior to the submission deadline.

Proposals located outside of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notice of Intent to Propose must be received by the **NMTI Procurement Office no later than 4:00pm local time, 01/25/2022, via email to amy.babauta@nmtechcnmi.org.**

For proposers located outside of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands an original and three (3) copies of sealed proposal must be postmarked by the US Postal Services of the official government postal service of foreign country **no later than 01/25/2022**, and mailed to NMTI Procurement Officer at PO Box 504880 Saipan, MP 96950 and the proposal must be received no later than 02/04/2022. Electronic submissions may be accepted if approved prior to the submission deadline.

The Project Description and Scope of Work is available beginning December 14, 2021 at the NMTI Procurement Office, located at the NMTI Main Office, Lower Base. Request may be sent via email to Ms. Amy Lynn Babauta at amy.babauta@nmtechcnmi.org.

/s/ Jodina C. Attao
CEO

/s/ Amy Lynn Babauta
Procurement Officer



ANNOUNCEMENT and PUBLIC NOTICE

(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds)

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) announces the availability of a limited number of Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) awarded through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for an EHV, an individual or family must meet one of four eligibility categories:

1. Experiencing homelessness;
2. At-risk of homelessness;
3. Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; OR
4. Were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

How do I get an EHV?

The CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition will refer eligible families to NMHC for EHVs. If you are experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, or experiencing any of the conditions listed above, please call any one of the following organizations to schedule an appointment to complete an assessment. NMHC will only receive applications through a direct referral process from the CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition. Applications will NOT be accepted at NMHC.

Division of Youth Services (DYS)
& Office of Youth Affairs
Office hours: 8 am to 4 pm
(Mon—Fri. except holidays)

Saipan: (670) 237-1017/1018 or (670) 664-2599 or (670) 285-1921
Tinian: (670) 433-9272
Rota: (670) 532-9393

Applications for appt. may be downloaded at: dcca.gov.mp or dys.gov.mp and dropped-off at: Kagman Community Center, Tanapag Youth Center, Tinian DYS Office, or Sinapalo Youth Center

Micronesia Legal Services Corp. (MLSC)
Office hours: 9 am to 12 pm
And 1 pm to 3 pm

Saipan: (670) 234-7729 or (670) 234-6243
Tinian: (670) 433-2664
Rota: (670) 284-0681 or (670) 532-0003/0004

Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (NMCADSV)
Office hours: 9 am to 5 pm
(Mon—Fri. except holidays)

Saipan: (670) 234-3878

All partnering agencies will begin accepting calls for appointment on January 10th, 2022. Due to the pandemic, face-to-face will be allowed by appointment only.

For definitions of the four eligibility categories, please visit the NMHC website at: nmhcgov.net

EHV is a form of tenant-based rental assistance similar to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. EHV is limited to the eligible population. Certification of eligibility is required. EHV referrals are managed through a direct referral process from the CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition. Please contact one of the agencies listed above for direct referrals to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation EHV Program.



A special thanks to the collaborative agencies involved in this program.
"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Parties in Hillbroom case fail to resolve issues

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The parties in the lawsuit filed by Junior Larry Hillbroom have failed to resolve their issues and finalize their settlement agreement, resulting in a new jury trial date.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona scheduled a new trial date for Hillbroom's lawsuit after the parties involved failed to resolve pending issues in their settlement agreement.

The new jury trial is set for March 8, 2022, at 10am and the alternative date is June 7, 2022, also at 10am.

The parties were also ordered to return to court for a status conference on Feb. 15, 2022, at 8:30am.

In 2010, Hillbroom sued his former attorneys, David Lujan and Barry Israel, for legal malpractice, negligence, breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, and violations of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

According to Hillbroom's lawsuit,

the defendants committed extrinsic fraud on the Guam guardianship court by denying him a fair opportunity to challenge their 56% retainer.

Hillbroom is represented by attorneys Mark Hanson and Rachel Dimitruk in this lawsuit.

Israel and Lujan represented Hillbroom when he was a minor in securing \$90 million from the Larry Lee Hillbloom estate. When Hillbroom became an adult, he sued his former lawyers for malpractice as well as his former trustee, Keith Waibel, for

conspiracy.

Israel was dismissed from the lawsuit in July 2020 after Hillbroom and Israel reached a settlement agreement.

In November 2021, the remaining parties in the lawsuit told the court that they had reached and agreed to a settlement.

However, during the latest status conference last week, it seems the parties could not resolve their issues.

Hillbroom is one of the four DNA-proven heirs of DHL Corp. founder Larry Lee Hillbloom, who died in a plane crash in 1995 near Saipan leaving behind him an estate estimated at about \$600 million.

Public warned of high surf, rip current risk

A high surf advisory remains in effect until 6pm today, Tuesday, while a high rip current risk remains through Friday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large breaking waves of 8 to 10 feet will be decreasing to 7 to 9 feet today along north facing reefs. Still, there will be dangerous rip currents along north facing reefs through Tuesday afternoon and east facing reefs through Friday in north and east facing reefs of the Marianas.

These conditions will create dan-

gerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

The public is advised to stay out of the water along north and east facing shores. Elsewhere, swim near a life-guard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. (PR)

UOG foundation partners with Opake on limited edition T-shirt

The University of Guam Endowment Foundation has partnered with Opake Guam to produce a limited edition T-shirt to commemorate the foundation's 2021 "G is for Giving" fundraising campaign.

The T-shirts are available while supplies last to anyone who donates \$50 or more to the foundation in support of University of Guam programs and students.

Opake Guam is a local brand and a retail boutique for apparel, urban art, and skate goods inspired by Guam's culture and lifestyle.

The shirt design shows two hands exchanging a seedling, symbolizing the act of giving in a way that will benefit the community—through the planting of a seed that will grow and bear fruit.

Funds raised will go toward capital projects, student scholarships, equipment purchases, research grants, bringing in visiting professors and lecturers, and more.

To learn more about these limited edition T-shirts and opportunities to give, please contact the University of Guam Endowment Foundation at (671) 735-2957 or info@uogendowment.org, or visit <https://give.uog.edu>. (UPG)



University of Guam Student Government Association representatives model new T-shirts designed by Opake for the UOG Endowment Foundation's "G is for Giving" campaign, a fundraiser for UOG programs and student scholarships. From left, Christian Gyles Ramos, Kyona Rivera, and Edrico Reyes. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

OMICRON

From Page 1

virus that's not going away.

The ultra-contagious omicron mutant is pushing cases to all-time highs and causing chaos as an exhausted world struggles, again, to stem the spread. But this time, we're not starting from scratch.

Vaccines offer strong protection from serious illness, even if they don't always prevent a mild infection. Omicron doesn't appear to be as deadly as some earlier variants. And those who survive it will have some refreshed protection against other forms of the virus that still are circulating—and maybe the next mutant to emerge, too.

The newest variant is a warning about what will continue to happen "unless we really get serious about the endgame," said Dr. Albert Ko, an infectious disease specialist at the Yale School of Public Health.

"Certainly COVID will be with us forever," Ko added. "We're never going to be able to eradicate or eliminate COVID, so we have to identify

our goals."

At some point, the World Health Organization will determine when enough countries have tamped down their COVID-19 cases sufficiently—or at least, hospitalizations and deaths—to declare the pandemic officially over. Exactly what that threshold will be isn't clear.

Even when that happens, some parts of the world still will struggle—especially low-income countries that lack enough vaccines or treatments—while others more easily transition to what scientists call an "endemic" state.

They're fuzzy distinctions, said infectious disease expert Stephen Kissler of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He defines the endemic period as reaching "some sort of acceptable steady state" to deal with COVID-19.

The omicron crisis shows we're not there yet but "I do think we will reach a point where SARS-CoV-2 is endemic much like flu is endemic," he said.

For comparison, COVID-19 has killed more than 800,000 Americans in two years while flu typically kills

between 12,000 and 52,000 a year.

Exactly how much continuing COVID-19 illness and death the world will put up with is largely a social question, not a scientific one.

"We're not going to get to a point where it's 2019 again," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. "We've got to get people to think about risk tolerance."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, is looking ahead to controlling the virus in a way "that does not disrupt society, that does not disrupt the economy."

Already the U.S. is sending signals that it's on the road to whatever will become the new normal. The Biden administration says there are enough tools—vaccine boosters, new treatments and masking—to handle even the omicron threat without the shutdowns of the pandemic's earlier days. And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention just reduced to five days the time that people with COVID-19 must stay in isolation so they don't sicken others, saying it's become clear they're most contagious early on.

DEADLY

From Page 1

Also, 10 cases have been confirmed positive for COVID-19 from surveillance and travel testing on Dec. 28, 2021, and Jan. 1, 2022, bringing the CNMI total to 3,297 cases since March 28, 2020. The individuals have been isolated and are actively monitored.

Of the 10 cases, nine were identified on Jan. 1, 2022, and one on Dec. 28, 2021; one was identified via contact tracing, eight were identified via community testing, and one was identified via travel testing. The vaccination statuses of the 10 cases identified are pending verification.

As of Jan. 1, 2022, there have been 2,332 recoveries, 663 active cases, and 18 deaths of the cases identified since Oct. 28, 2021.

As of Jan. 2, 2022, there were 15 individuals hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 (seven unvaccinated, eight vaccinated; and three on a ventilator). Four have been discharged.

According to the CHCC news release, unvaccinated individuals are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and unvaccinated individuals spread the virus at a higher rate than vaccinated individuals, thereby increasing the spread and risk of serious illness toward other unvaccinated individuals.

Vaccines are the best protection against the highly transmissible virus, and are readily available at the Multi-Purpose Center, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, and Saturday, 8am to 4pm. Register for COVID-19 vaccines at www.vaccinatecnmi.com. Individuals age 18 or older are now eligible to avail of a booster shot; 16- and 17-year-olds can avail of a Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot.

The CHCC highly encourages unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated or get a booster shot against COVID-19 to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Data from small clinical trials show that vaccine effectiveness against

COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization.

Since Oct. 28, 2021, there have been 3,006 new cases, of which 1,489 were identified via contact tracing, 1,447 were identified via community testing, and 70 were identified via travel testing.

A total of 67 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Jan. 1, 2022, which comprises travel testing and surveillance testing but does not include DFEMS testing.

To register for community-based testing, visit <https://covidtesting.chcc.health>. No code is required to register. If there are no dates showing, it means all spots have been filled. More dates will be announced.

While you wait to get tested or for your test results, stay at home as much as possible and limit your contact with others. Live COVID-19 safe: wear your mask; wash your hands; watch your distance; avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily; be alert for symptoms daily; and get tested for COVID-19.

The CHCC Communicable Disease Investigation/Inspection team has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the newly confirmed cases, and this effort will continue until all probable cases are identified and tested.

Our contact tracers will reach out to you if you are deemed high risk. The associated risk of infection depends on the level of exposure, which will, in turn, determine the type of monitoring. Establishing the level of exposure can be difficult and requires investigation.

If you have concerns regarding a possible exposure to a positive case, call our contact tracers at (670) 285-1942, 286-1710, or 286-1711.

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, new loss of taste or smell, etc.), see your provider or call the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at (670) 233-2067. (Saipan Tribune)

Atalig says \$80M ARPA money already spent last fiscal year

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig said Thursday the CNMI government has ac-

cumulated over \$80 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds last fiscal year that were

spent mainly for "provisions of government."

In response to an inquiry about ARPA funds during a radio press briefing, Atalig said the \$80 million is just off the top of his head but they will release to the media the exact figures as soon as their staff prepares everything.

He said the "provisions of government" refers to Section 603C of ARPA, which allows the government to recover and get assistance through ARPA for lost revenues.

"And that's identified by saying where we're at in terms of

our revenues compared to pre-pandemic budget level," he said.

Atalig said they expended close to \$80 million last fiscal year in their ARPA mainly to bring back over 160 people that

were furloughed and putting their salaries 100% on that funding.

He said they also lifted austerity when they got the ARPA funding and that allowed the government employees to get 100% of their salary in terms of hours.

He said 20% of every gov-



Atalig

ernment employee's salary is covered by ARPA until they get through this COVID-19 pandemic or until ARPA funding allows them.

"I will be coming out with a report in next couple of weeks with more details," he said.

The CNMI government received in May 2021 \$481.9 million in ARPA that was allocated to the Commonwealth. The ARPA money provides emergency funding for the ongoing COVID-19 emergency,

replenishes lost government revenues during the pandemic, and brings back jobs within the government that were lost during the pandemic.

Atalig earlier stated that ARPA has different sections of funding and that the \$481.9 million is the amount that Section 602 provides for the CNMI.

In June 2021, Atalig presented details of how the government plans to spend \$512,076,165 million in ARPA funding—considered the largest one-time cash gift the federal government has ever given the CNMI so far. *(Ferdie De La Torre)*

Veteran town hall meetings to continue on Jan. 6

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, through the CNMI Office of the Governor and the CNMI Office of Veterans Affairs, invites all veterans residing on Saipan to a series of veteran town hall meetings to discuss issues of concern for veterans and military families.

The upcoming town hall meeting is slated for Thursday, Jan. 6, 2022, at the Tanapag Youth Center in Tanapag and will be from 6pm to 8pm.

Future meeting schedules will be announced later, which will include meetings on Rota and Tinian.

The town hall meetings are designed to be an interactive forum for veterans and military families to voice their needs and concerns.

Contact the CNMI Office of Veterans Affairs at (670) 664-2650 for more information. *(PR)*

Free webinars on gov't contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars this month. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ Jan. 6-Wages - Which wage do you pay your employees on government contracts? The Guam PTAC will discuss the various laws and regulations to make sure you stay in compliance.

■ Jan. 13 - Buy American Act - The Buy American Act was put in place to protect American manufacturing.

However, the rules are complicated and can be frustrating for government contractors. The Guam PTAC will discuss the BAA and offer some guidance on how to stay in compliance.

■ Jan. 20 - SBIR/STTR Programs-Calling all inventors and innovators - The Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs encourage small businesses to engage in Federal Research and Development that has the potential for commercialization. We will explain the programs and show how you can get involved.

To register visit: www.guamptac.com. *(PR)*

Legislature honors UOG Endowment Foundation and scholarship donors

In connection with National Scholarship Month last November, the University of Guam Endowment Foundation and several of the foundation's most generous and longest-term scholarship donors were recognized by the Guam Legislature last Dec. 14.

Sen. Amanda L. Shelton presented a legislative resolution to the UOG Endowment Foundation and certificates of recognition to endowed scholarship founders, including the late Dr. Charles Parent; Gerry Perez; James and Young Hee Ji; Frederick J. Horecky; the



UOG ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

From left, Katrina Perez, executive director, University of Guam Endowment Foundation; scholarship founders Dr. James and Young Hee Ji; scholarship founder Gerry Perez; Wilfred Leon Guerrero, UOGEF chairman and UOG president emeritus; and Sen. Amanda L. Shelton of the 36th Guam Legislature.

University of Guam's Society of Emeritus Professors and Retired Scholars; and IT&E Overseas.

Since January 2000, the UOGEF has awarded \$559,890 in scholarships to UOG students and continues to raise funds through campaigns year-round.

For more information on how to donate to these scholarships or other endeavors that support UOG students and programs, contact the University of Guam Endowment Foundation at (671) 735-2957 or info@uogendowment.org, or visit <https://give.uog.edu>. *(UOG)*



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-22-005

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES FOR LOWER BASE SEWER REPLACEMENT – PHASE II

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting a fee proposal from a professional archaeologist who meets the U.S. Department of Interior qualifications (36CFR61) to create a work plan to prepare information, data and documentation needed to conduct archaeological monitoring during construction of all areas identified by the CNMI HPO for the construction of a new sewer line on Rte. 314 – Lower Base Drive and Rte. 30 – Chalan Pale Arnold Road in Lower Base, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval of the USEPA.

The scope of Archaeological Services will include, but not be limited to:

1. Conduct background research to document the environmental and land-use histories of the project site.
2. Prepare a monitoring plan to the specifications of the Scope of Work and the guidelines for research designs.
3. Implement the monitoring plan activities following the approved plan.
4. Prepare an End of Fieldwork Letter that provides a general description of the project, work completed, burials recovered, sites and features identified.
5. Prepare a draft report summarizing the monitoring and data recovery activities & within six months of completing the fieldwork.
6. Prepare and submit, based on review comments, two final hard copies and one CD-ROM copy of the archaeological report to the HPO.
7. Prepare and submit revised CNMI Site Forms for previously recorded sites, as needed, and new site forms for all newly documented sites.
8. Submit all artifacts collected and pay all fees according to the Commonwealth Museum of History and Culture (CMHC) to the specifications of the current draft curation standards.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the PROPOSAL must be submitted in a SEALED ENVELOPE marked "CUC-RFP-22-005: Archaeological Services for Lower Base Sewer Replacement – Phase II" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 27, 2022, at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 12, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copies to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer, via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-015

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of heavy equipment for its fleet in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United States Department of the Interior (US DOI), Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-22-015, Supply and Delivery of Heavy Equipment**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 3, 2022** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 20, 2022**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Yvonne C. Ogumoro, CUC's Acting Water/Wastewater Division Manager via email at yvonne.ogumoro@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

WH launches initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders

WASHINGTON D.C.—Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra recently launched the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders and announced U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai as his co-chair of both the White House Initiative and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

Former Guam delegate Dr. Robert Underwood is expected to be appointed to the advisory commission—a move

that Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero said will help build the nation's capacity to address the challenges faced by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

"As a decorated and dedicated servant of Guam and our people, Dr. Underwood brings a wealth of knowledge on Pacific history, CHamoru heritage, and public policy that will advance the interests of our islander community at the highest levels of national government," said Leon Guerrero. "With his trademark wisdom and visionary insight, Dr.

Underwood will help build the nation's capacity to address the challenges faced by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, who offer much more than diversity to the United States. We are confident in Dr. Underwood's inherent ability to advocate for the good of Guam and we stand committed to supporting his valued contributions through the Biden Administration."

The White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, which was created in response to President

Joe Biden's Executive Order 14031 (Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders), is charged with driving an ambitious, whole-of-government agenda to advancing equity, justice, and opportunity for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities in the United States.

Like other communities of color, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to exacerbating longstanding health inequities facing AA and NHPI communities, the language of some political leaders during this public health crisis has also fueled a spike in anti-Asian bias, xenophobia, and violence. To address these inequities, the new WHIAANHPI is housed within HHS, returning this initiative to the department where it was first launched under the Clinton Administration in 1999.

"Returning the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to HHS, where it originated, represents an important step in reinvigorating this historic initiative," said Becerra. "The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to tackling a wide scope of challenges impacting communities that have been historically overlooked and underserved. I look forward to working with Ambassador Katherine Tai in leading our

federal efforts to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AA and NHPI communities across the nation."

"I am honored to co-chair the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders," said Tai. "President Biden, Vice President [Kamala] Harris and the entire Administration are committed to creating a more equal, just, and inclusive America. Leading this initiative with Secretary Becerra will be a critical part of our work across government to expand opportunity, confront systemic barriers to success, and address the rising violence targeted at the AA and NHPI community."

"The White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders is the embodiment of the longstanding commitment and vision that President Biden and Vice President Harris have for our diverse and growing community," said deputy assistant to the president and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander senior liaison Erika Moritsugu. "This Administration has delivered results for AA and NHPI communities with the President's whole-of-government approach to equity, along with the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, and now again with the reinvigoration and expansion of this historic Initiative."

"With [the] launch of WHIAANHPI's Interagency Working Group and Regional Network within

HHS, we now have the tools to secure resources, promote opportunities, and increase the visibility of AA and NHPI communities," said WHIAANHPI executive director Krystal Ka'ai. "I am honored to serve under the leadership of Secretary Becerra and Ambassador Tai during this pivotal time for our community as we work to build a brighter future for generations to come."

Under the leadership of Becerra and Tai, the newly-expanded Initiative includes an Interagency Working Group tasked with coordinating the federal government's efforts to support AA and NHPI communities. It also includes a regional network comprised of federal officials in 10 federal regions across the country who help to connect AA and NHPI communities with federal grants, programs, and resources.

The WHIAANHPI under the Biden-Harris Administration will focus on helping to coordinate a comprehensive federal response to the rise in acts of anti-Asian bias and violence; address the systemic lack of disaggregated data on AA and NHPI communities; expand language access and language assistance programs for AA and NHPI individuals across federal programs; address educational, health, economic, and housing disparities impacting AA and NHPI communities, and more. For more information on the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, see www.hhs.gov/whiaanhpi. (PR)

SULC donates to PH typhoon relief efforts

The Saipan Unity Lions Club has donated \$500 in monetary assistance to families affected by Typhoon Odette's devastation in the Philippines (international name Typhoon Rai).

Typhoon Odette devastated at least seven regions in the Philippines, leaving death, injuries and loss of properties. The death toll now stands at 407, with the highest number (220) recorded in Central Visayas. The country's the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reports that at least 1,140,118 families have been affected.

Relief goods were delivered to some families in Iloilo in the Western Visayas through the club's twinning club, Iloilo Fort San Pedro Lions Club - District 301 Philippines.

"We continue to pray for



Relief goods are delivered to families in Iloilo in the Western Visayas. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Relief goods are made available through the Iloilo Fort San Pedro Lions Club - District 301 Philippines. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

all those who were greatly hit by this typhoon," the Saipan

Unity Lions Club said in a statement. (Saipan Tribune)



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962

E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticm.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 06-2021

Opening date: December 17, 2021 Closing date: January 07, 2022

Positions: **SAIPAN:**
(1) Baggage Handling Systems (BHS) Technician
(1) General Maintenance I
(1) Ports Police Officer I

ROTA:
(1) Maintenance/Custodial-I (CPA Rota)
(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance I

TINIAN:
(1) General Maintenance I
(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 7, 2022**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

P.O. BOX 500861 CK
SAIPAN, MP 96950
TEL: (670) 664-3200/1
FAX: (670) 664-3237

info@mymarianas.com
www.mymarianas.com

The Marianas
1 Island 1 Time 1 Plan 1

REGULAR BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Regular Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 10:00a.m.** in the MVA Conference Room, Saipan, MP 96950.

MEETING AGENDA

- 1) Preliminary Matters
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Adoption of Agenda
 - d. Adoption of Minutes
 - i. Regular Board Meeting Minutes- October 27, 2021
 - ii. Regular Board Meeting Minutes- November 24, 2021
- 2) Public Comments
- 3) Committee Reports
 - a. Finance Committee
 - i. Fund Status Report
 - b. CNMI TRIP Korea
 - i. Marketing Program
 - ii. Airline Incentive RFP
- 4) Old Business
 - a. MVA- RFP- 20-2019 Architectural and Engineering Services
 - b. MVA- RFP-21-2039 MVA Office Space Lease
 - c. MVA- RFP-22-2046 TRIP Hybrid Quarantine Facility
 - d. Self-Care Leave Resolution
- 5) New Business
 - a. Japan Tourism Ambassador
- 6) Executive Session
- 7) Miscellaneous/Announcements
- 8) Adjournment

/s/ Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

WANTED!

Are you interested in ocean conservation activities and the preservation of culture?

Do you have a passion for communications?

If you are passionate about community development and have an entrepreneurial spirit, then this might just be the job you've been dreaming about but thought too good to be true!

Communications Manager Part-time

The successful candidate will have a bachelor's degree in journalism, public relations, communications, marketing, or related field plus a minimum of 5 years of relevant experience. You will have significant experience working with multiple forms of media and membership services. You likely have experience starting a business, civic club, or project from the ground up. Your job will be overseeing, executing, and managing communications for the organization and several of our projects as well as developing and implementing organizational strategies. You will know the importance of deadlines and be responsible for developing, managing, and implementing multiple task schedules.

Requirements – A passion for our mission to help educate everyone in our community learn about ocean and marine science and the urgent need to care for our precious resources.

Excellent communications skills and superb organizational skills. Others would say that you have a positive "can-do" attitude and that you were their favorite, productive team player. You will be able to demonstrate proven experience with self-motivation and the ability to work without supervision.

You are not asking what to do next but devising ways to accomplish goals in a manner that the Executive Director can approve of easily.



If you are interested, send an email to info@friendsmarianatrench.org with the subject line "Comms Manager". Indicate why you are interested and attach your resume. Also include three references and their contact info. Preference given to individuals who are fluent in Chamorro and/or Carolinian languages. This position is funded by a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Launch of Japan travel bubble is pushed back

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority has yet to launch the Japan travel bubble due to the daily increase of COVID-19 cases in Japan, particularly the highly transmissible omicron variant.

Initially MVA's target launch for the Japan travel bubble was December but due to the increase in omicron-positive cases in Japan, the launch has been pushed back and remains uncertain.

In short statement from MVA managing director Priscilla Iakopo, she said that

MVA continues to monitor the situation in Japan and other market sources before moving forward and launching a travel bubble.

"Due to the omicron variant, we are closely monitoring other source markets such as Japan as the daily cases in Tokyo, Japan are in-

creasing," she said.

According to a previous article on the *Saipan Tribune*, MVA had expected to launch the Japan travel bubble by mid-December to early January with the first step being to inform the Japan Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Health about the CNMI's interest in reopening the route between Japan and the CNMI.

"We were advised [by MVA Japan office] that December is probably a good target date as vaccination rates in Japan continue to [accelerate], as well

as how the Japan government is also controlling the cases there. We understand that the Japan government has not been pushing to entertain any travel bubble with any other destination right now because they're really trying to control their COVID-19 cases there," Iakopo had said in that earlier interview.

Back in September, TRIP Japan ad hoc committee chair Nick Nishikawa started discussions with the MVA Japan office on how they will carry out the first steps in establishing the Japan travel bubble.

MVA board chair Viola Alepuyo said in a previous MVA board meeting that it is important to aggressively push forward with the Japan travel bubble.

"We only have one thing that we can sell right now, and that's how safe our community is. That's a marketing tool that nobody else in our region can boast of. Let's use that marketing tool and be aggressive to establish the other travel bubbles so that we can get the tourists coming in in order to boost our economy," she had said.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

5.0-magnitude quake in Guam

At 8:49am on Jan. 3, 2022, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred 48 kilometers north northeast of Yigo Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. (PR)

Vendors sought for Precinct 5 swap meet

Precinct 5 is hosting a week-end swap meet on Jan. 22, 2022, at the Kagman Community Center basketball court and is soliciting vendors who may want to participate.

This is an outdoor event for the Precinct 5 community to clear out the old to make way for the new year. This event is created to host a "multi-family" swap-meet style event. This event will focus on recruiting Precinct 5 vendors, but will be open to all buyers in the CNMI community.

This is a one day event to allow for registered participants to sell and/or trade their secondhand housewares and gently-used clothing and accessories.

To register to be a vendor at the Precinct 5 swap meet, go to <https://bit.ly/P5Thrift>. Vendors from Precinct 5 will be prioritized. Interested vendors are encouraged to submit the form (<https://bit.ly/P5Thrift>) by Jan. 7, 2022, to confirm your participation in this event. Thank you for your time and support in making these kinds of activities available to the Precinct 5 community. (PR)

Power service interruption today

There will be a scheduled

power service interruption today, Jan. 4, 2022, from 9am to 1pm, affecting Kiya 4 of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in Chalan Kanoa (Juan Nong St., Hamalap Ln., San Isidro Av. and Sandy Beach Homes). Businesses that will be affected include the Armatech Office, SPG Corp., Pepoy's Restaurant, and Surf Club Saipan Restaurant.

Purpose: To replace a 400-foot concrete pole with a 45-foot concrete pole along Hemlap Ln. in Chalan Kanoa, due to low primary lines and for the safety of the community.

■ Water well(s) affected: None

■ Wastewater facility affected: A-4 Lift Station

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

Public warned: Rough seas until today

A high surf advisory is in effect until 6am today, Tuesday, along north facing reefs of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. There is also a high rip current risk until 6am today along north and east facing reefs of the three islands. A small craft advisory is also in effect until 6am today.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large breaking waves of 7 to 9 feet along north facing reefs to 8 feet are expected in the surf zone. For the high rip current risk, dangerous rip currents are expected. The high surf will be present along north facing reefs of

the Marianas, while the high rip risk will be along north and east facing reefs.

These conditions will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

These hazards may continue into Wednesday. Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

The public is being advised to stay out of the water along north and east facing shores. Elsewhere, swim near a life-guard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Also, northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots, with gusts up to 30 knots and seas of 7 to 9 feet will be present in Tinian, Rota, and Saipan coastal waters. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. The hazardous conditions may extend into Wednesday. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in these hazardous conditions. (Saipan Tribune)

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Rosa Mercedes Rickrik Taman (Name of Mother) K.H.R.T. P.E.J.R.T. (Name of Children) Minor Children Plaintiffs, -vs- Peter Atalg Castro Name of Alleged Father Defendant,)

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT: Peter Atalg Castro

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 501634 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 9th day of November, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION



INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB22-CHCC/PH-NCDB-009

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 4, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LEASE OF VEHICLE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE: WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER


/s/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY




\$1M DONATED TO UOG

The Guam Board of Accountancy donated \$1 million this month to the School of Business and Public Administration at the University of Guam. The funds will go toward the school's Guam Accountancy Endowment Fund to benefit the Senator Herminia Dierking and John Phillips Visiting Accounting Professor and Lecturer Program. This program was established by Public Law 32-191 in 2014 to enhance the accounting program by providing University of Guam students with access to specialized classes not available in Guam. From left, Anita Borja Enriquez, UOG senior vice president and provost; former Guam governor Joseph F. Ada; Annette T. Santos, dean, UOG School of Business and Public Administration; Dave Sanford, executive director, GBOA; Taling Taitano, secretary, GBOA; Katrina Perez, executive director, UOG Endowment Foundation; John Onedera, president, GBOA; and Thomas W. Krise, UOG president.

UOG ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-22-002

A&E SURVEY SERVICES FOR THE DANDAN HOMESTEAD WATERLINE AND SERVICE LATERAL REPLACEMENT (W20-074)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Survey Services of the DanDan Homestead Waterline and Service Lateral Replacement in DanDan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this contract is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this RAESP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government-observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RAESP package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 19, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-RAESP-22-002, A&E Survey Services for DanDan Homestead Waterline and Service Lateral Replacement**", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 8, 2022. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 24, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Mr. Kennet Jann R. Bernardo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email kennet.bernardo@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

America's sick and costly health care system

Forget car dealers; Americans are flummoxed by the marketplace for health care. Two new reports published last week show that consumers are increasingly anxious about medical costs and access to care, with record numbers signing up for subsidized health coverage. The system is not working for the majority of Americans, and the inequities are only getting worse.

A new national survey released last week shows the frustration that Americans are feeling amid the continuing grind of the pandemic. An estimated 100 million Americans would describe the health care system as either "expensive" or "broken," according to the West Health-Gallup 2021 Healthcare in America Report. Almost half say their view of the system has worsened in the era of COVID-19. And as the Tampa Bay Times' Margo Snipe reports, the nation's outlook is equally grim, with nine in 10 of those surveyed saying they expect their health care costs to increase.

The United States spends nearly \$4 trillion on health care, making it the most expensive system in the world. Yet it produces the worst outcomes in categories such as life expectancy, obesity rates, chronic disease burdens and suicide rates, compared to other high-income countries, according to the Commonwealth Fund. While the nation's top one percent experience the best health outcomes, according to one West Health executive, those outcomes worsen as income decreases.

The survey, billed as the largest of its kind on health care since the start of the pandemic, shows that COVID amplified the worries that Americans have about the cost of health services and prescription drugs. Seven in 10 Americans say their household pays too much for the quality of care they receive. And the findings in Florida matched the national mood. Nearly 30 percent of Floridians report health care costs are a major financial burden. Consumers are skipping doctor's visits because they cannot afford them. And the number foregoing care is also spiking, to about one-third of the respondents, the highest that level has reached since the start of the pandemic. And health disparities are mounting for Americans of color; while 60 percent of the survey respondents said access was an issue, that concern rose to 75 percent among Black Americans.

The concern over affordability comes as the Biden administration announced last week that a record 13.6 million Americans have signed up for health coverage for 2022 on the Affordable Care Act marketplaces, with nearly a month remaining to enroll in most states. White House advisors credited increased government subsidies, which lowered out-of-pocket costs, for the surge in enrollment. They also said enhanced outreach efforts resulted in connecting more people to insurance options.

The spike in enrollments reflects the demand for coverage in Florida, Texas and other states that have not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Through

See AMERICA'S on Next Page



Feeling despair and uncertainty? This Roman Stoic philosopher has some answers

Today many Americans are experiencing despair about climate change, the new surge in COVID-19 and the uncertain future of our democracy. The best way to cope with these "afflictions of the spirit," according to the Roman Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca, is not by pursuing false cheer this holiday season but by seeking equanimity with all life's misfortunes, including death itself.

Seneca, a contemporary of Jesus, believed that the worst form of human suffering is despair. After long personal experience and deep reading in philosophy, he concluded that the only antidote to this crippling state of existence is daily visualization—and radical acceptance—of the calamities we fear most.

A principal theme of his writings is the salutary effect of mental rehearsal of sickness, disability, loss of loved ones and one's own death. This is the way a person attains "true freedom" and "inward detachment."

As Seneca wrote in a series of letters to one aspiring Stoic, Lucilius Junior, "We need to envisage every possibility and to strengthen the spirit to deal with the things which may conceivably come about. Rehearse them in your mind: exile, torture, war, shipwreck." To this list of objects intended for deep meditation, he added floods, volcanoes, plagues and fires.

Born in Córdoba, Spain, Seneca spent most of his life in Rome during a period of brutal and violent politics under five emperors. He served as a senator during the reign of Caligula and as a tutor to Nero.

Distilling the source of human misery down to its essence, fear of death, Seneca counseled his followers that if they wished to be happy they must first come to peaceful terms with their own demise. "Rehearse death," he advised Lucilius. "To say this is to tell a person to rehearse his freedom." Such practice is the only pathway to peace of mind, and, significant to Seneca, who spent much of his life at the tempestuous court of Rome, preparedness for death also places a person above "political powers."

Seneca did not come to these insights about life, death and politics easily. He suffered his way into them. Early in life, his experience of severe asthma charted his course to Stoicism. He once became so prostrate with labored breathing that he was sure he would die. To relieve his suffering, he considered taking his own life. "It was my Stoic studies that really saved me," Seneca recorded. Identifying that "the fear of dying" was the chief source of his despair, he adopted the belief, "Nothing is grim when we have escaped that fear."

Later, the death of a close friend plunged Seneca into prolonged grief. His friend was "younger than I was, a good deal younger

By ELI MERRITT
Los Angeles Times

Eli Merritt is a psychiatrist and political historian at Vanderbilt University and the author of the forthcoming book Disunion Among Ourselves.



too," leaving the philosopher angered at the disorder of the universe. To tolerate this fact of life, too, Seneca self-prescribed radical acceptance and mental preparation to ease future anguish.

Seneca's self-therapy calls upon human beings to place the laws of nature, whether we like them or not, at the center of our thoughts. "Now I bear it in mind," he wrote in one letter, "not only that all things are liable to death but that liability is governed by no set rules. Whatever can happen at any time can happen today."

Seneca is famous for this contemplative model of self-healing. But in his writings he underscores a second facet of life that is vital to achieving a calm spirit. It is friends. During hard times, philosophy was always his first consolation and, after this, the "intimate bond" of friendship.

Not surprisingly, he connected friendship, illness and death into a soothing spiritual web. "There is nothing, my good Lucilius," he wrote, "quite like the devotion of one's friends for supporting one in illness and restoring one to health, or for dispelling one's anticipation and dread of death."

So unpredictable was death that when Seneca was 61 and in the prime of his philosophical work, his former pupil, Nero, ordered his execution. Suspected of plotting to overthrow Nero's corrupt regime, Seneca was ordered to commit suicide and he complied.

Were Seneca alive today, he would not advocate passivity in the face of climate change and a global pandemic. He would advise us to fight and sacrifice for our values, at all costs, as he did during his lifetime.

Yet, to be most effective, and to live well during your remaining days, he would also say, "lay aside the load on your spirit." Get free of "the agony of fear." Accept your mortality and that of your loved ones and friends. To gain ultimate relief from despair, these are the things, Seneca counsels, that need to be "not just learnt, but learnt by heart."

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Can't hide from COVID behind jabs, masks

The omicron variant has illustrated that vaccines are a mitigator of COVID-19, not an eliminator. And it's teaching us there's no impenetrable shield that will keep us safe from the virus. We can't hide from it behind jabs and masks.

More in my circle of friends and family have COVID than at any point of the pandemic, and nearly all are fully vaccinated. But none have got much sicker than they would have with a cold or the flu. As of Dec. 25, almost 60% of cases of COVID-19 in the country were caused by the omicron variant, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That affirms the importance of getting vaccinated. But omicron has also exposed the reality that vaccines aren't working nearly as well as we hoped to prevent the spread of the virus.

And that calls into question the wisdom of vaccine mandates, especially as the science and efficacy of the vaccine can now be compared to other innovative COVID treatments like GlaxoSmithKline's Sotrovimab and other types of monoclonal antibodies effective against delta and other earlier variants of the virus.

If you get COVID and don't end up in the hospital or die, who cares? The vaccines have proven themselves effective in that regard. While case numbers have surged, deaths haven't kept pace.

A Carnival Cruise Lines ship that set sail just before Christmas required all passengers to be vaccinated and tested for COVID

before they boarded. That didn't prevent a small outbreak from running through the ship, keeping it from docking at some of its scheduled ports.

That experience should inform policymaking. Dr. Anthony Fauci's call for a vaccine mandate for domestic air travel seems dated, now that we know vaccinated people can spread the virus the same as the unvaccinated.

South Africa, where omicron was first detected, was considering a nationwide vaccine mandate just four weeks ago. But since then, case rates have plummeted and talk has turned to lifting contact tracing and quarantines.

The nation's vaccination rate is just 25%, but health officials there estimate 80% of the population has had COVID. South Africans believe they are benefiting from herd immunity, a theory the United States has stubbornly rejected in favor of the more aggressive goal of universal vaccination.

If the U.S. mimics the South African experience, omicron will quickly race through the population, and then just as rapidly subside. Absent yet another mutation of COVID, that could be the turning point that moves the virus from pandemic to endemic.

We may have at last reached the point in the pandemic at which we can accept more risk in the name of returning to normal. The CDC seemed to recognize that this week when it cut the quarantine time for those who test positive without symptoms to five days from 10.

By **NOLAN FINLEY**

The Detroit News



The longer isolation period for those who weren't visibly sick was crippling the airline, health care and other industries. The decision was a nod to the fact that a positive test, for most people, particularly the vaccinated, is no longer a potential death sentence.

Our energy and resources should shift to ramping up production and distributing the new medicines and antibody treatments that promise to dramatically cut the virus' mortality rate.

If omicron is any indication, we can all expect to get COVID at some point, no matter how hard we try to dodge it. If we get vaccinated and mind our health, that's something we can live with, just as we've lived with influenza.

The passing of 2021 should mark the end of having our lives limited by COVID-19.

After 2021 tumult, here's what it will take to protect American democracy

For those of us who care about protecting democracy, 2021 has at times resembled the sort of nightmare where you see a friend standing on a train track but your screams about the looming danger can't be heard. The runaway train of illiberalism continues to bear down on American democracy, and the need to act could not be more urgent.

In truth, this nation avoided the worst that many anticipated might happen during and after the 2020 presidential election. Notwithstanding the "Big Lie" promoted by former President Trump and his cronies, the election, in fact, went off properly, and the candidates who received the most votes were allowed to assume their offices.

However, what the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 showed, and which subsequent congressional investigations have made even clearer, is that Trump and his minions were very much willing to try to steal the election. They considered a variety of specific plans, with some going so far as to wargame strategies for overturning his electoral loss.

Yet the main reason that Trump and his team were unable to pull off their schemes was because the election wasn't all that close. Of the 59 presidential elections since 1792, there have been 13 that were narrower in the electoral college and 17 that were closer in terms of the popular vote.

Despite Trump's failure, the right-wing anti-democratic forces are still at it. Over the last year, Republicans in state legislatures crafted various measures to make it easier to pull off what they tried to do in the 2020 election. The GOP's anti-democratic strategy has several dimensions.

First, gerrymander so aggressively that they can win majorities of seats with minorities of votes. The template here is the Wisconsin State Assembly, where the GOP has so successfully gerrymandered the state that in 2018, they received only 47% of the Assembly votes but picked up 64% of the Assembly seats. As congressional redistricting unfolds after the 2020 census — which (by design) undercounted Democratic-leaning residents — similar efforts are underway in every state controlled by Republicans.

Second, make it harder for those same Democratic constituencies to vote. For example, by striking them from electoral rolls, or limiting the number of polling stations in heavily Democratic areas, including in communities of color, or by making it illegal to provide various forms of voting assistance. In just the first half of 2021, 18 states enacted more than 30 laws that restrict access to the vote.

Third, if all else fails and Democrats somehow still manage to get more votes, nullify the votes themselves. Trump demanded this of Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania lawmakers and election officials after his losses in those states in 2020. The elections officials, who upheld normal electoral practices, have in many cases been replaced by ones making few bones about their desire to ensure GOP victories occur no matter what.

Fourth, purge any Republicans critical of anti-democratic political strategies. In one swing state after another, Trump supporters are working to replace impartial election administrators with partisan hacks who, in some cases, have explicitly said they will try to enforce results on the basis of the Big Lie. Of the 10 Republicans in Congress who voted to impeach Trump after the Jan. 6 insurrection, all appear headed for the exits, either voluntarily or by primary challenges from Trump loyalists.

All of this adds up to a Republican Party that has made a complete turn toward what in other countries, such as Viktor Orban's Hungary or Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkey, is known as "illiberal democracy." Illiberal democracies are ones where elections take place, but they are rigged in the sense that not everyone has equal access to the ballot; or the ballots themselves do not get counted in impartial ways. In such nations, the purpose of elections is not to ensure that elected representatives reflect the will of the people, but rather to legitimate and consolidate the power

By **ELI MERRITT**

Los Angeles Times



Nils Gilman is vice president of programs at the Berggruen Institute in Los Angeles.

of one party or leader.

Despite ample evidence of how this has happened in other countries, and of the explicitly stated intentions of Trumpist Republicans in the U.S., Americans continue to stand on the railroad tracks, their backs turned to the impending danger. The primary imperative, then, is for all citizens to take seriously the danger of election nullification, achieved through various means.

Taking that threat seriously means passing federal voting rights and election security bills to ensure that every citizen is empowered to vote, that every vote is properly counted and that the candidates with the most votes assume office. Unfortunately, Democrats have failed to get these bills to President Biden's desk. They need to do so immediately, if necessary, by carrying out filibuster reform.

Perhaps even more important is the critical political work at the state and local level, where the clearest threats to our democratic system appear at present. For ordinary citizens, this means getting directly involved with local politics, because showing up to vote every four years is hardly enough.

This can include volunteering to serve as a poll worker; getting involved in the campaigns of pro-democracy candidates for governor and secretaries of state; and running for one of the thousands of local electoral administration positions across the country. Ideally, we will move toward nonpartisan professionals overseeing elections, while citizens insist that elected representatives commit to respecting ballot outcomes.

A liberal democracy in the end depends not on laws, but on the political virtues and commitments of its citizens. Those who would tear down our democratic traditions are a minority in this country, but a focused one. To defend against this deepening threat, Americans, regardless of party, will have to respond with greater fervor and dedication.






AMERICA'S

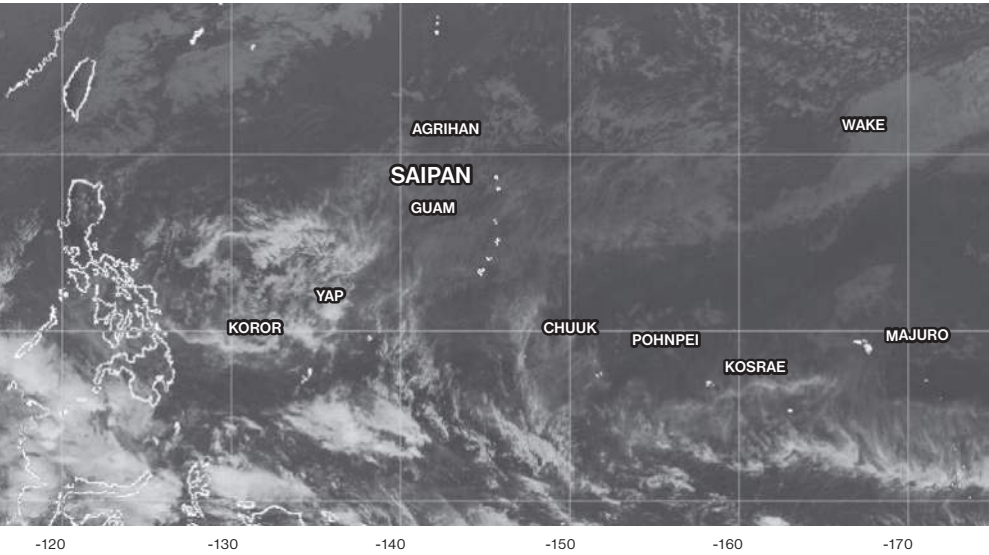
From Page 8

mid-December, enrollment in Florida had jumped to 2.6 million people, up from 2.1 million in the same period a year earlier. The program has made a dent in covering more of the uninsured. But the experience shows how prices drive a family's medical decisions, and of how even basic care is getting out of reach for many.

Cost-shifting to government and private insurers has hidden the growing crisis in medical costs for years. And America's bloated health care bureaucracy has never seriously confronted the middlemen who simultaneously siphon profit and limit choice. Consumers are pinched, stressed out and foregoing care, and two years of COVID has only fueled greater uncertainty. West Health and Gallup have provided a valuable snapshot of the burden and pessimism consumers are carrying. Expensive, broken, unfair—that's hardly a health system for America or a model for the world.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Breezy wednesday. Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Breezy during the day. Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.	
86°	75°	86°	76°	86°	75°	86°	75°	86°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:03 AM, MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line continues its southward migration through the Marianas and its southern edge is now passing over Guam. This shear line brought around an inch of rain to parts of Saipan yesterday. Overnight scatterometry shows 20-25 mph winds within the shear line with altimetry showing seas of 10 to 11 feet just west of the islands. The Ipan buoy currently shows about 5 foot seas just east of Guam, but a quick rise in seas is expected later this morning as the wind-generated wave effects reach to southern Guam.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	83 / 87 °F	
Palau	Partly cloudy	80 / 86 °F	
Yap	Afternoon clouds	81 / 89 °F	
Chuuk	Mostly cloudy	76 / 82 °F	
Pohnpei	Heavy rain	78 / 82 °F	
Kosrae	Partly cloudy	83 / 87 °F	
Majuro	Afternoon clouds	80 / 85 °F	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Wednesday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:01 PM
Saturday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:03 AM	7:35 PM	-
Wednesday	8:59 AM	8:38 PM	-
Thursday	9:48 AM	9:38 PM	-
Friday	10:32 AM	10:32 PM	-
Saturday	11:11 AM	11:24 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly cloudy	57 / 68 °F	
Beijing	Sunny	22 / 44 °F	
Hong Kong	Afternoon clouds	59 / 72 °F	
Honolulu	Partly sunny	72 / 78 °F	
London	Sunny	29 / 44 °F	
Los Angeles	Mostly sunny	48 / 64 °F	
Manila	Partly cloudy	81 / 90 °F	
Melbourne	Sunny	56 / 72 °F	
Miami	Partly sunny	75 / 81 °F	
New York	Partly sunny	44 / 64 °F	
Osaka	Morning clouds	44 / 61 °F	
Paris	Morning clouds	22 / 43 °F	
Pusan	Mostly sunny	38 / 54 °F	
Rome	High level clouds	29 / 54 °F	
Salem	Overcast	42 / 49 °F	
San Francisco	Mostly sunny	47 / 59 °F	
Seoul	Mostly sunny	28 / 44 °F	
Tokyo	Sunny	44 / 57 °F	
Washington, DC	Mostly sunny	40 / 60 °F	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
2:37 AM	Low Tide	-0.97	
9:06 AM	High Tide	1.87	
2:19 PM	Low Tide	1.16	
7:03 PM	High Tide	1.92	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7				
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily	1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily	1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily				
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily				
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily				
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
GUAM TO ROTA				2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

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Business

AT&T, Verizon reject U.S. request to delay 5G wireless plans

WASHINGTON (AP)—Verizon and AT&T have rejected a request by the U.S. government to delay the rollout of next-generation wireless technology.

A joint letter Sunday from the telecommunications giants to U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Steve Dickson, the head of the Federal Aviation Administration, sought to dismiss concerns brought by U.S. airlines that a new 5G wireless service could harm aviation.

But Hans Vestberg, CEO of Verizon Communications, and John Stankey, CEO of AT&T, also wrote that they were willing to accept some temporary measures over the next six months to limit the service around certain airport runways.

Airlines had asked the Federal Communications Commission to delay this week's scheduled 5G rollout, saying the service, set to launch Wednesday, could interfere with electronics that pilots rely on.

Airlines for America, a trade group for large U.S. passenger and cargo carriers, said in an emergency filing that the FCC has failed to adequately consider the harm that 5G service could do to the industry. The group wants more time for the FCC and the FAA, which regulates airlines, to resolve issues around aviation safety. Those are related to a type of 5G service that relies on chunks of radio spectrum called C-Band, which wireless carriers spent billions of dollars to buy up last year.

Siding in part with airlines, Buttigieg and Dickson wrote late Friday to the CEOs of AT&T and Verizon to propose a delay in activating 5G C-band service near an undetermined number of "priority airports" while the FAA studies the potential for interference with aircraft operations.

AT&T and Verizon previ-

ously agreed to a one-month delay in 5G, which provides faster speeds when mobile devices connect to their networks and allows users to connect many devices to the inter-

net without slowing it down. But the telecommunications executives said Sunday that further delays requested by the government would harm their customers.

"Agreeing to your proposal would not only be an unprecedented and unwarranted circumvention of the due process and checks and balances carefully crafted in

the structure of our democracy, but an irresponsible abdication of the operating control required to deploy world-class and globally competitive communications

networks that are every bit as essential to our country's economic vitality, public safety and national interests as the airline industry," the executives wrote.

\$15B from Gates, French Gates tops 2021 biggest gift list

By MARIA DI MENTO
THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY

It was a healthy year for big gifts to charitable causes in 2021, a year that saw one of the largest multibillion-dollar contributions in more than a decade, according to a Chronicle of Philanthropy tally.

The power philanthropists Bill Gates and Melinda French Gates announced in May that they were divorcing and then gave a jaw-dropping \$15 billion to their foundation in July. The money will bolster its endowment and support the grant maker's work in global health, development, policy and advocacy, and U.S. education well into the future.

The gift increased the grant maker's endowment to about \$65 billion and is the Gateses' biggest infusion of money into the foundation since 2000, when they transferred Microsoft stock then valued at \$20 million.

When they announced this year's gift, the two philanthropists indicated they planned to continue running the foundation together for the time being but announced through the foundation that if after two years either one of them decides not to work together, then French Gates will resign as co-chair and trustee.

Regardless, the philanthropists made clear in two new Giving Pledge letters that they both intend to keep giving big in the years ahead.

French Gates wrote that she will continue to support efforts to fight poverty and "advance equality for women and girls and other marginalized



In this Feb. 1, 2019, file photo, Bill and Melinda Gates smile at each other during an interview in Kirkland, Wash.

groups." Gates wrote in his Giving Pledge letter that the work of the foundation will continue to be his "top philanthropic priority" and that he plans to increase his giving in other areas like "mitigating climate change and tackling Alzheimer's."

Nonprofits that focus on those causes are likely to reap big rewards, given that Bill Gates's net worth is pegged at about \$137 billion and Melinda French Gates's at \$6 billion.

Meanwhile, Nike co-founder Phil Knight and his wife, Penny's, \$500 million contribution to the University of Oregon tied for second place on the list. The gift will be used to expand the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact and follows a \$500 million donation the Knights gave to launch the science campus in 2016. The Knight Campus aims to speed up the process of transforming new scientific discoveries into medical treatments and other developments to improve people's lives.

Phil Knight, whose net worth stands at about \$60 billion,

earned a bachelor's degree in business from the university in 1959. The couple have given the university a total of at least \$1.6 billion to date.

Also tied for No. 2 is a \$500 million challenge pledge the financier George Soros made through his Open Society Foundations to Bard College for its endowment. The pledge aims to persuade other donors to back the college's effort to raise \$1 billion over the next five years.

College officials announced in April that the pledge had already helped them raise \$250 million from other donors. Soros, whose net worth is pegged at \$8.6 billion, founded Soros Fund Management, a New York firm that manages hedge funds.

Next on the list is a \$480 million donation to Northwestern University from Patrick Ryan, founder of Ryan Specialty Group, an insurance services company, and his wife, Shirley. The Ryans, whose net worth stands at close to \$8 billion, gave the money to their alma mater for

TOP 10 LIST OF BIGGEST GIFTS

1 Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, and Melinda French Gates, founder of Pivotal Ventures, an investment firm, gave \$15 billion to Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for endowment

2 (tie) Philip Knight, co-founder of Nike, and his wife, Penny gave \$500 million to University of Oregon to expand the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact

2 (tie) George Soros, chairman of Soros Fund Management, through his Open Society Foundations gave \$500 million to Bard College for endowment

4 Patrick Ryan, founder of Ryan Specialty Group, an insurance services company, and his wife, Shirley gave \$480 million to Northwestern University for a variety of programs

5 Denny Sanford, chairman of United National Corporation Sanford Health, gave \$350 million to establish a virtual-care hospital

6 Denny Sanford, chairman of United National Corporation Sanford Health,

gave \$300 million for graduate medical education and to expand a sports complex

7 William Goodwin Jr., a real-estate developer, his wife, Alice, and their late son, Hunter, gave \$250 million to establish Break Through Cancer, a foundation that will support cancer research

8 Joe Tsai, co-founder of Alibaba Group, and Clara Wu Tsai, co-owner of professional sports teams, through their Joe and Clara Tsai Foundation, gave \$220 million to establish the Wu Tsai Human Performance Alliance, a medical research nonprofit

9 Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon gave \$200 million to Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum for an education center and museum renovations

10 Gerald Chan, co-founder of Morning-side Group, an investment firm, through his Morning-side Foundation gave \$175 million to University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School for endowment

a variety of programs.

The money will back education and research efforts in applied microeconomics, business, digital medicine, global health, neuroscience, and translational research programs at the university's Feinberg School of Medicine. A portion of the gift will also pay for building projects.

The Chronicle's annual top 10 list of the largest gifts announced by individuals or their foundations totaled more

than \$18.1 billion in 2021. (The 2021 list actually includes 11 donations because of ties.) The contributions on the 2021 list went primarily to well-established institutions. Eight of the 11 gifts are from billionaires whose cumulative wealth totals \$426.3 billion.

The Chronicle's annual rankings are based on the 10 biggest publicly announced gifts. The tally does not include contributions of artwork or gifts from anonymous donors.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Tesla says it delivered record 936K vehicles in 2021, up 87%

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Tesla delivered a record 936,000 vehicles last year, up 87% from its 2020 delivery count, the company said. The Austin, Texas-based electric vehicle company announced its fourth-quarter production and delivery results on Sunday. The carmaker said it delivered 308,600 vehicles in the final quarter of 2021, which is also a record for the company and thousands more cars than

Wall Street analysts expected. Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives says the numbers are "jaw-dropping" given the ongoing global chip shortage affecting the automotive industry. Ives says the production increase was likely boosted by growing demand from car buyers in China, as well as broader enthusiasm for electric vehicles.

Suez Canal revenues hit all-time record at \$6.3 billion

CAIRO (AP)—Egypt's Suez

Canal said Sunday its annual revenues reached \$6.3 billion last year, the highest in the crucial waterway's history. Admiral Ossama Rabei, head of the Suez Canal Authority, said last year's revenues rose 12.8%, compared to 2020, when the canal achieved \$5.6 billion. He said in a statement that 20,649 vessels flowed through the Suez Canal last year, an increase of 10% compared to 18,830 vessels in 2020. About 10% of global trade, including 7% of the world's oil, flows through the Suez Canal, which

connects the Mediterranean and Red seas. The canal, first opened in 1869, is source of national pride and foreign currency to Egypt. The unprecedented 2021 revenues came as the shipping industry is still under pressure from two years of the coronavirus pandemic.

Twitter bans Rep. Greene's personal account for COVID claims

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Twitter said Sunday it had banned the personal account

of far-right Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene for multiple violations of the platform's COVID-19 misinformation policy, the latest strike against the firebrand whose embrace of conspiracy theories has been called "a cancer" for the GOP and led the House to boot her from committees. The Georgia Republican's account was permanently suspended under the "strike" system Twitter launched in March, which uses artificial intelligence to identify posts about the coronavirus that are

misleading enough to cause harm to people. Two or three strikes earn a 12-hour account lock. Four strikes prompt a weeklong suspension. Five or more strikes can get someone permanently removed from Twitter. In a statement on the messaging app Telegram, Greene blasted Twitter's move as un-American. She wrote that her account was suspended after tweeting statistics from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, a government database that includes unverified raw data.

Nation

2 missing; survivors count blessings after Colorado fire

LOUISVILLE, Colo. (AP)—Search teams looked for two missing people on Sunday in the snow-covered but still smoldering debris from a massive Colorado wildfire, while people who barely escaped the flames sorted through what was left after the blaze and investigators tried to determine its cause.

The flames ripped through at least 9.4 square miles (24 square kilometers) and left nearly 1,000 homes and other buildings destroyed in suburbs between Denver and Boulder. It came unusually late in the year following an extremely dry fall and amid a winter nearly devoid of snow. Experts say those conditions, along with high winds, helped the fire spread.

Rex and Barba Hickman sifted through the ashes of their Louisville home with their son and his wife.

Their son Austin cut a safe open with a grinding tool to reveal gold and silver coins, melted credit cards, keys and the charred remains of the couple's passports.

They evacuated with their dog, their iPads and the clothes



A burned truck in a destroyed neighborhood in Louisville, Colo., on Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022.

AP

on their back. Rex Hickman said he was heartbroken to see there was nothing left of their home of 23 years.

"There's a numbness that hits you first. You know, kind of like you go into crisis mode. You think about what you can do, what you can't do," he said. "The real pain is going to

sink in over time."

The couple have to find a rental property and clothes in the short-term, and their insurance company told them Sunday it would take at least two years to rebuild their home.

"We know how fortunate we are," Rex Hickman said. "We have each other. We have

great friends, wonderful family. So many people have got to be suffering much more than we are, and we feel for them."

While homes that burned to the foundations were still smoldering in some places, the blaze was no longer considered an immediate threat—especially with Saturday's snow

and frigid temperatures.

Authorities initially said everyone was accounted for after the fire. But Boulder County spokesperson Jennifer Churchill said the reports of three people missing were later discovered amid the scramble to manage the emergency. One was found alive, officials said Sunday.

Crews were still looking for

a woman at a home in Superior and a man living near Marshall. Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle said their homes were "deep in hot debris and covered with snow. It is a difficult task."

Other investigators were seeing if the missing people might have made it out, but not contacted their families or friends, Pelle said.

Pentagon chief Austin says he has tested positive for COVID

WASHINGTON (AP)—Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Sunday he has tested positive for COVID-19 and was experiencing mild symptoms while quarantining at home.

In a statement Sunday night, Austin said he plans to attend key meetings and discussions virtually in the coming week "to the degree possible." He said Deputy Secretary Kathleen Hicks would represent him in appropriate matters.

Austin said he last met with President Joe Biden on Dec. 21, more than a week before he began to experience symptoms, and had tested negative the morning of that day.

"I have informed my leadership team of my positive test result, as well as the President," Austin said. "My staff has begun contact trac-

ing and testing of all those with whom I have come into contact over the last week."

Austin, 68, said he was fully vaccinated and received a booster in October. He said he requested a test Sunday morning after experiencing symptoms while at home on leave and, given the result, planned to remain in quarantine for five days, per guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The vaccines work and will remain a military medical requirement for our workforce. I continue to encourage everyone eligible for a booster shot to get one. This remains a readiness issue," he said.

In October, another member of Biden's Cabinet, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, tested positive for COVID-19.

Fauci: CDC mulling COVID test requirement for asymptomatic

WASHINGTON (AP)—As the COVID-19 omicron variant surges across the United States, top federal health officials are looking to add a negative test along with its five-day isolation restrictions for asymptomatic Americans who catch the coronavirus, the White House's top medical adviser said Sunday.

Dr. Anthony Fauci said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is now considering including the negative test as part of its guidance after getting significant "push-back" on its updated recommendations last week.

Under that Dec. 27 guidance, isolation restrictions for people infected with COVID-19 were shortened from 10 days to five days if they are no longer feeling symptoms or running a fever. After that period, they are asked to spend the following five days wearing a mask when around others.

The guidelines have since received criticism from many health professionals for not specifying a negative antigen test as a requirement for leaving isolation.

"There has been some concern about why we don't ask people at that five-day period to get tested," Fauci said. "Looking at it again, there may be an option in that, that testing could be a part of that,



Dr. Anthony Fauci, White House chief medical advisor and director of the NIAID, and Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, arrive to participate in the White House COVID-19 Response Team's regular call with the National Governors Association in the South Court Auditorium in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House Campus, Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, in Washington.

AP

and I think we're going to be hearing more about that in the next day or so from the CDC."

Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, said the U.S. has been seeing almost a "vertical increase" of new cases, now averaging 400,000 cases a day, with hospitalizations also up.

"We are definitely in the middle of a very severe surge and uptick in cases," he said. "The acceleration of cases that we've seen is really unprecedented, gone well beyond anything we've seen before."

Fauci said he's concerned that the omicron variant is overwhelming the health care system and causing a "major disruption" on other essential services.

"When I say major disruptions, you're certainly going to see stresses on the system and the system being people with any kind of jobs ... particularly with critical jobs to keep society functioning normally," Fauci said. "We already know that there are reports from fire departments, from police departments in different cities that 10, 20, 25 and sometimes

30% of the people are ill. That's something that we need to be concerned about, because we want to make sure that we don't have such an impact on society that there really is a disruption. I hope that doesn't happen."

While there is "accumulating evidence" that omicron might lead to less severe illness, he cautioned that the data remains early. Fauci said he worries in particular about the tens of millions of unvaccinated Americans because "a fair number of them are going to get severe disease."

Biden vows US to act decisively if Russia invades Ukraine

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—President Joe Biden conferred on Sunday with Ukraine's leader over the Russian troop buildup near its border, promising that the U.S. and allies will act "decisively" if Russia further invades the Eastern European nation.

Biden and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's call came as the U.S. and Western allies prepared for a series of diplomatic meetings to try to de-escalate a crisis that Moscow said could rupture ties with Washington.

"President Biden made clear that the United States and its allies and partners will respond decisively if Russia further invades Ukraine," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement following the call.

Psaki added that Biden underscored his commitment to the principle of "nothing about you without you," the tenet

that it won't negotiate policy that impacts Europe without its allies' input.

Biden has spoken of hitting Russia with economy-jarring sanctions if it moves on Ukraine's territory, but he said last month that U.S. military action is not on the table.

The Kremlin has demanded that any further expansion of NATO exclude Ukraine and other former Soviet countries. The Russians have also demanded that the military alliance remove offensive weaponry from countries in the region.

The White House has dismissed Russia's demands on NATO as a non-starter. A key principle of the NATO alliance is that membership is open to any qualifying country. And no outsider has membership veto power. While there's little prospect that Ukraine would be invited into the alliance anytime soon, the U.S. and its allies won't rule it out.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Hong Kong news outlet to close amid crackdown on dissent

HONG KONG (AP)—A Hong Kong online news site said Sunday that it will cease operations in light of deteriorating press freedoms, days after police raided and arrested seven people for sedition at a separate pro-democracy news outlet. Citizen News announced its decision in a Facebook post Sunday. It said it would stop updating its site on Jan. 4, and it would be shuttered after that. “We all love this place, deeply. Regrettably, what was ahead of us is not just pouring rains or blowing winds, but hurricanes and tsunamis,” it said in a statement. “We have never forgotten our original intent. Sadly, we can no longer strive to turn our beliefs into reality without fear because of the sea change in the society over the past two years and the deteriorating media environment.” Citizen News is the third news outlet to close in recent months, following pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily and online site Stand News.

S Korea: Unidentified person crosses border into North Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea’s military said Sunday that an unidentified person crossed the heavily fortified border into North Korea. The person was earlier spotted by surveillance equipment at the eastern portion of the border, known as the Demilitarized Zone, but avoided capture by South Korean troops on Saturday night. The surveillance later detected the person crossing the border, Joint Chiefs of Staff officers said. South Korea sent a message to North Korea on Sunday morning to ensure the safety of the person, but the North hasn’t responded, the officers said requesting anonymity citing department rules. It was unclear if this was a rare case of a South Korean hoping to defect to the North, or it could be a North Korean who briefly entered the South Korean territory for some reason before returning to the North.

Fire ravages South Africa’s historic Parliament complex

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—A major fire ripped through South Africa’s 138-year-old Parliament complex on Sunday, gutting offices and causing some ceilings to collapse at a site that has hosted some of the country’s pivotal moments. As fire-

fighters struggled to tame the blaze, a dark plume of smoke and flames rose high into the air above the southern city of Cape Town. Around 70 fire-fighters were still battling the fire hours after it started in the early morning, Cape Town’s Fire and Rescue Service spokesman Jermaine Carelse said. Some were lifted up on a crane to spray water on the blaze from above. No injuries have been reported and Parliament itself had been closed for the holidays. Visiting the scene, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said a person was “being held and is being questioned” by police in connection with the blaze. Police later confirmed a 51-year-old man had been detained.

Sudan’s PM announces resignation amid political deadlock

CAIRO (AP)—Sudan’s Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announced his resignation Sunday amid political deadlock and widespread pro-democracy protests following a military coup that derailed the country’s fragile transition to democratic rule. Hamdok, a former U.N. official seen as the civilian face of Sudan’s transitional government, had been reinstated as prime minister in November as part of an agreement with the military following the October coup. In that time he had failed to name a Cabinet and his resignation throws Sudan into political uncertainty amid uphill security and economic challenges. In a televised national address Sunday, Hamdok called for a dialogue to agree on a “national charter” and to “draw a roadmap” to complete the transition to democracy in accordance with the 2019 constitutional document governing the transitional period.

UK makes omicron contingency plans for hospitals, schools

LONDON (AP)—The U.K. government has been making contingency plans in case hospitals, schools and other workplaces are hit by major staff shortages amid the country’s record-breaking spike in coronavirus infections. Public sector workplaces have been preparing for staff absences ranging from 10% to 25% as COVID-19 sickens more people or forces them to isolate, the Cabinet Office said. The highly transmissible omicron variant has caused Britain’s daily new caseload to soar over Christmas and the New Year, with a new daily high of 189,000 on Dec. 31.

Egypt pushes for calm after flare-up in Gaza hostilities

JERUSALEM (AP)—Egyptian officials Sunday pushed for Israel and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip to rein in hostilities and adhere to a cease-fire in place since the war in May. The Egyptian efforts came a day after Hamas militants launched rockets into the Mediterranean Sea off central Israel, prompting Israel to carry

out airstrikes on militant positions in Gaza early Sunday. No casualties were reported. The Israeli military said it struck “a rocket manufacturing site and military posts” belonging to Hamas in the Gaza Strip overnight in response to Saturday’s rocket fire. “Whoever points missiles at Israel bears responsibility,” Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said at the start of the government’s weekly Cabinet meeting.

Brazil health agency confirms COVID-19 cases in cruise ship

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—Passengers on the cruise ship MSC Preziosa had to wait more than six hours to disembark at Rio de Janeiro Sunday due to an inspection by Brazilian health authorities that confirmed 28 cases of COVID-19 on board - 26 passengers and two crew members. Rio’s health secretariat said in

a statement that among those who tested positive, people living in Rio or the nearby region can quarantine themselves at home. Others must first isolate in hotels, and there was no information provided about who would pay for the costs. After the inspection, MSC Preziosa was authorized by federal health regulator Anvisa to continue operating. Other passengers were waiting to embark for Bahia.

GOING TO MY FATHER’S HOME IN PARADISE

† Lucio Crisostimo Aldan

Born on June 27, 1949, sailed to his new home in Paradise on Sunday, December 19, 2021 at the age of 72.

Through his lifetime, Lucio as known to his sibling and cousins as “Pilog” or “Chu” was a caring and supported, patient, helpful and understanding father, grandfather and great grandfather. Even after he suffered his stroke and lost the love of his life. He has so much to give. Lucio was loved by many and to those that crossed path with. Lucio being true servant of God, ensured the values are reflected towards families, and friends. Being a great cook for the family, he would assist with church fiestas and family parties where needed. Lucio was so health conscious and frequented the gym for his weekly exercise therapy. He loved soccer, fishing, golfing and listening to Hawaiian music. His genuine smile, joyful greetings, jokes, and conversations, his kindness and unselfishness never went unnoticed.

Journeying through the gates of paradise, Lucio is welcomed and greeted by his wife, Concepcion (Connie) Litulumar Aldan; parents: Justo Luis and Teresita Crisostimo Aldan Sanchez; parents in law: Pedro Matagolai and Julia Somorang Teregeyo Litulumar; his grandsons: Kevin Igharyang Aldan J., and Benigno Aldan Aguon; great grandson: Damian Aguon Salas; Son-in-law: Benito Sablan Aguon; Brothers, Sisters, and In-laws: Vicente Elameto; Vicente A. Sanchez; Joaquin A. Sanchez; Carmen A. Sanchez; Justo A. Sanchez; Vicente Castro; Gregorio Cruz; Joaquin T. Litulumar; Juan T. Litulumar; Vicente T. Litulumar, Sylvano and Jacinta Litulumar; and William S. Arriola.

His loving memory will forever live in the hearts of his Children and spouse: **Julia Orlean L.** and Wilbur Ada [Karl Peter/Juanda; Keisha Jamie/Angelo;Isaiah Danrique Payuullulang] **Kevin Michael L.** and Margarette B. Aldan [Alberta Lyn/Jerome; Kelani Kay; Margarette Michelle/Dominic (Dominic Michael Amwólgyól Jr.); Miracle Joy] **Kenn L. Aldan** [Leonard Anthony/Macy (Aleina Faith & Ayven Kennjoe); Lenora Amber; Lawrence Andrew; Kenn Jr.] **Karen Michelle A.** and Kent Kalen [Lucio Jude/Ferlisa; Kent Jr/Elizabeth; Jay Franklin/Amanda; Katie Lynn; Kalie Ann; Dionne] **Katherine Therese A. Aguon** [Angelica Corina/George Jr (Lucio Joaquin and Kira Connie); Ray Steven/Mona (John Vincent); Benito Jr/Jemima; Derek Thomas; Jeffrey Vincent; Angelo Joseph; Tito; Emma Louise; Elijah Iokepa; Erin Isabella; Liam] **Joanne Olivia A.** and John Mario [Kenisha Joan/Vincent; Leticia Faith/Jay Vincent; John Jr./Katrina; Gabrielle Jean; Luis Mitchel; Angelica Paulette]

His Siblings and spouses:

Bernadita S. Cruz and Family; **Marichu G. Sanchez** and Family; **Michaela U. Sanchez** and Family; **Frances S. Castro** and Family; **Leon A.** and Erlinda Sanchez and Family; **Luathati M. Sanchez** and Family; **Veronica S.** and George C. Cabrera and Family; **Manuela S.** and William C. Reyes and Family; **Elena A. Cruz** and Family; **Ruth Ann A. Sanchez** and **Mark C. Salas** and Family; **Francisco A. Sanchez** and Family;

His Brothers and Sisters In-Law and spouses: Rosa L. and David H. Ayuyu and Family; Catalina L. and Sterling Skilling and Family; Anicia L. Arriola and Family; Children and Family of †Sylvano T. Litulumar; Joanna T. Camacho and Family; Jose T. and Melissa P. Litulumar and Family; Melvina T. Litulumar and Family; Pedro T. Litulumar and Family.

He is additionally survived by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces and godchildren.

For the repose soul and memory of Lucio, masses of intention are offered daily 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM at the following church parishes: **Santa Soledad, San Jose, Kristo Rai, San Vicente, San Jude, Santa Remedios, San Antonio, and San Roque.**

Lucio will be with us for the last time on Wednesday, Janaury 05, 2022. Holy Rosary will be recited at 9:00AM at the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation Chapel, Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00am at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral, followed immediately with the Rite of Committal at Tanapag Cemetery where he will join his wife at peaceful rest.

For your thoughts, love and prayers,

The Children and families of †Lucio Crisostimo and †Concepcion (Connie) Litulumar Aldan
The Children and families of †Justo Luis and †Teresita Crisostimo Aldan Sanchez

Overdrive

Hyundai Ioniq 5 is a stylish, roomy and speedy EV

By HENRY PAYNE
THE DETROIT NEWS

JULIAN, California—We've come a long way from Pious to Ioniq.

Twenty years ago, the Toyota Prius sparked a green segment in the American car market. The stylish hybrid was gobbled up by granola chewers and became a hit, inspiring predictions from the pointy-head class that hybrids would dominate the market by 2020. Hybrid GMC Yukons, Ford Fusion hybrids, Chevy Volts came and went as the hybrid hype fizzled. Turns out, green is a niche like V-8s, diesel trucks, off-road dirt kickers.

Now comes another green spasm and the market is flooding with battery-powered vehicles. But this time, the niche is fun.

Hybrids wore out their welcome in part because they were sooooo cloying. Their screens awoke with tree branches reminding us they were doing good. Saving the planet! Just like Leo DiCaprio! Prius was derisively dubbed the "Pious" and the name stuck.

The Ioniq 5 is not that car, even as it is the Prius's logical heir.

"What is that?" a passerby on a San Diego sidewalk exclaimed, ogling the Hyundai's brooding, Dodge Challenger-like cowl, creased doors and sci-fi pixel taillights. "It's cool looking."

"You should see the inside," I smiled, flinging the door open to reveal twin 12-inch screens like a computer desktop. "Ooooooh," my new friend panted.

Self-driving through California traffic (good Lord, is it ever

not rush hour in Cali?), I toggled the 5's left turn signal and the car automatically switched lanes. Then I floored the accelerator pedal—ZOT!—and 446 pound-feet of torque shot me past the slower car. Toggle the right signal and I automatically merged back in lane. Gimme a high 5!

Green doesn't have to be vanilla. It's a lesson Hyundai learned with its Ioniq sub-brand, which started in 2015 as an electrified answer to Prius but lacked personality.

Then along came stylish Tesla rocket ships that you could summon across a parking lot and drag race out of stoplights. How cool can EVs be? Mustang now makes one.

The edgy Ioniq 5 follows in these sexpots' footsteps, but it is more interested in room than vroom.

Sure, the Ioniq can wear you out with windy speeches about how moral it is—"seats, headliner, door trim, floor, arm rests use eco-friendly, sustainably sourced materials (that) include recycled PET bottles, plant-based yarns and natural wool yarns and bio paint with plant extracts"—but these claims are buried in press releases. There's not a green leaf to be found on its mod bodywork.

The 5 reminds that the 2000 Prius was a very practical car. It had good cargo space under the rear hatch, good visibility, head-up dash driving info (before head-up displays were a thing), and could go forever on a tank of gas.

Ioniq follows in Prius's footsteps with an EV that is more hatchback than SUV. The 5 is stretched over the longest wheelbase in Hyundai's lineup—longer even than the Palisade



HYUNDAI/TNS
The 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5.

sade three-row SUV. Note: in an indication of EVs' niche status, however, my Limited trim Ioniq 5 tester cost nine grand more than a similarly equipped full-size Palisade Limited. That's a lot of extra coin for a compact-class Hyundai.

My 6'5" frame easily sat behind myself in the 5's rear seat with knee room to spare. Heck, Hyundai could fit a third row in this thing (like the spacious Tesla Model Y) if it wanted to. A Tesla-like panoramic sunroof gives the cabin an added sense of openness.

The airiness continues up front. The Ioniq employs an open footwell like the original Tesla Model S (or my parents' 1960s Buick station wagon), so I could splay my feet while self-driving. Postal carriers might embrace the 5 to easily slide across the seat to stuff mailboxes.

When I get a hot hatch at home like the VW Golf GTI or Mazda 3 Turbo, I head to Hell, Michigan, to have some fun. When in San Diego, the spaghetti curves of the Laguna Mountains beckon.

Ioniq's acceleration may be bioniq, but it is no hot hatch.

This is curious given Hyun-

dai's choice (like its Model Y, Mustang Mach-E and Volkswagen VW ID.4 rivals) to make the base single-motor Ioniq 5 a rear-wheel-drive car to optimize performance. Hyundai certainly knows how to make corner carvers like the rabid Veloster N.

But 5 could care less about handling. Through the California-79 twisties, my all-wheel-drive tester wallowed about, an indifferent dance partner. "Payne, do we really have to do this?" it seemed to say as I toggled SPORT mode, trying to add pep.

My hatchback preference would be the VW Golf GTI, which is an absolute riot to flog through the curves—while offering plenty of hatchback utility and range to spare for long weekends in the mountains. But I belong in the motorhead niche.

For green buyers who don't have my need for speed, Ioniq offers everything you need—including good range. Range is the Achilles heel of EVs, limiting them to metro commuters. Within its metropolitan envelope, the Ioniq 5 works hard to earn your trust.

For example: behold the

heat pump.

Outside SoCal's climate paradise, northern latitudes are hell on EVs. Option all-wheel drive on Ioniq 5 and it reduces range from 303 to 256 miles. But the AWD 5 comes standard with a heat pump to assure you get that range even in cold temps. The only EV (including my Model 3) that has hit its mileage marks in sub-30 degree weather was a Hyundai Kona EV I tested two year ago—complete with heat pump.

That assurance should get you good range around

Michigan when Hyundai begins to sell 5s beyond its core coastal markets in 2022. If you need to juice up the 5 at a local Supercharger, it won't keep you waiting.

After a full day flogging 5 through the mountains, I stopped at an Electrify America supercharger at a shopping mall with just 27% of charge remaining. ZOT! With Hyundai's Porsche Taycan-like, 800-volt recharging architecture, I filled to 80% (205 miles) in just 15 minutes—twice as fast as in my 400-volt Tesla.

That's not Tucson fast (Hyundai's best-selling compact SUV will fill up with 370 miles worth of petrol in just 5 minutes), but it's a stop that can be budgeted into a busy day.

And that 15 minutes will help you bone up on more of the Ioniq 5's cool features. Like Smaht Pakk. After unplugging, you can summon the car to you with Hyundai's smartphone app. Just like Hollywood actor John Krasinski in that TV ad.

He's not nearly as pious as DiCaprio.

NUTS & BOLTS

2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5

■ Vehicle type: Battery-powered, rear- and all-wheel-drive five-passenger hot hatch
■ Price: \$40,925, including \$1,225 destination fee (\$55,725 as tested)
■ Powerplant: 58 kWh or 77.4 kWh lithium-ion battery with single or dual-electric-motor drive
■ Power: 225 horsepower, 258 pound-feet of torque (RWD); 320 horsepower, 446 pound-feet of torque (AWD)
■ Transmission: single-speed automatic

■ Performance: 0-60 mph, 4.9 seconds (Car and Driver, AWD as tested); top speed, 115 mph
■ Weight: 4,662 pounds (AWD as tested)
■ Fuel economy: EPA, 114 MPGe (FWD), 98 MPGe (AWD); range, 303 miles (FWD), 256 miles (AWD)

Report card

■ Highs: Sharp looks; roomy cabin
■ Lows: Pricey; limited initial nationwide availability
■ Overall: 3 stars

Q: I went to Costco to get snow tires. While I was waiting, I was told they could not remove my wheels because the key for the locking lug nuts was missing. I went to the Honda dealer who had rotated my tires four weeks ago for advice. I was told these are not genuine Honda locks and they could not make a new key. The car still has the original tires and wheels and I have never changed out the locks. I didn't even know I had locks. I am now driving around with new snow tires in my car and can't use them. What would you do?

A: Most wheel locks will keep honest people from stealing your fancy rims. But there are options for removing them. (Thieves already know.) Mechanics know that many auto parts stores sell special sockets that will bite onto

MOTORMOUTH: Locked tires

the outside of the lug nuts but will damage their appearance at the very least, and probably destroy them. Be prepared to buy new lug nuts—locking or not. It is a small price to pay to get those winter tires installed. It is impossible to obtain the right replacement key.

Q: I just purchased all-season touring tires for my vehicle. Some reports suggest touring tires may not be non-touring all-season tires on slushy or snowy streets. What gives? How can touring tires be considered all season if they don't fare well on slushy or snowy streets?

A: Touring tires, whether for summer use, all-season use or winter use, are constructed to provide a comfortable ride.

Incidentally, experts agree that all-season tires are good for climates that have light or occasional snow. For the snow belt—including Chicago—they advise winter tires.

Q: I own a 2008 Toyota Solara SLE convertible with 26,000 miles of gentle use. Recently, I needed to adjust tire pressure due to temp changes by only 2 psi. After a 10-mile trip, the TPMS light came on blinking then steady indicating a malfunction. I checked pressure the next morning and it checked out OK at 32psi in each tire. Yesterday after a few errands the light came on again while I was pulling into my garage. All four tires have just over 10,000 miles. I realize the

sensors have a limited life span. I just did not know if it could be something else and would appreciate your input.

A: Your guess about the life span of the sensors as the problem is probably good. The sensors are battery powered and those batteries may be getting weak. You may have to replace the sensors since there's no way to simply replace the batteries.

Q: Regarding a 2015 Chevy Impala with the 3.6-liter, V-6 engine, the owner's manual says to change the transmission fluid as indicated in the maintenance schedule. The maintenance schedule for normal driving does not mention changing the transmission fluid. The maintenance

By BOB WEBER
Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



schedule for severe driving states that the automatic transmission fluid should be changed every 45,000 miles. Does the transmission fluid need to be changed for normal driving? If so, is the fluid exchange process offered by the dealer service department appropriate?

A: Unless you pull a cabin cruiser, you needn't change the ATF. But if you choose to do it, the fluid exchange process is the way to go. Dropping the pan sometimes leads to trouble.

Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Life & Style

Governor gives 'Jeopardy' contestant a 2nd chance at clue

A New York resident who was stumped by a "Jeopardy" question about his state's governor got a do-over Friday, joining Gov. Kathy Hochul's virtual COVID-19 briefing to tell her he knows who she is now.

"Here in New York we actually believe in second chances," Hochul said before introducing Ben Walthall, the Brooklyn resident who failed to buzz in on the clue, "In 2021, she became the first female governor of New York state."

The clue was read again Friday by a Hochul staff member who at first said "first female president" and then corrected himself to "governor of New York state." Walthall correctly responded, "Who is Kathy Hochul?"



NEW YORK OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR VIA AP
In this image from video provided by the New York Office of the Governor, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul speaks with "Jeopardy" contestant Ben Walthall, a resident of the Brooklyn borough of New York, Friday Dec. 31, 2021, who failed to buzz in on a clue about Hochul in a recent episode of the television program.

None of the contestants in the episode that aired Wednesday answered the question about Hochul, even Amy

Schneider, the "Jeopardy" juggernaut who had won 22 consecutive games as of Thursday's broadcast.

Walthall told Hochul that his episode was filmed "a couple months ago, right when you took office, so that's part

of the reason why I may have sat out on that question."

Hochul, the former lieutenant governor, took over

as governor in August when fellow Democrat Andrew Cuomo resigned amid sexual misconduct allegations. A "Jeopardy" spokesperson said Wednesday's episode was filmed Oct. 12.

Walthall said he grew up in Massachusetts but has lived in New York for 11 years. He said his girlfriend is a New York City public school teacher, and he thanked Hochul for her efforts to promote COVID-19 vaccinations among eligible children. "It's really important to keep both teachers and kids safe," Walthall said, "so I definitely appreciate all you're doing there."

Hochul told Walthall there are no hard feelings.

"I don't have a long memory," she said, "so we're good." (AP)

2021 box office closes with more fireworks for 'Spider-Man'

NEW YORK (AP)—Hollywood closed out 2021 with more fireworks at the box office for "Spider-Man: No Way Home," which topped all films for the third straight week and already charts among the highest grossing films ever. But even with all the champagne popping for "No Way Home," the film industry heads into 2022 with plenty of reason for both optimism and concern after a year that saw overall ticket revenue double that of 2020, but still well off the pre-pandemic pace.

Movie theaters began the year mostly shuttered but ended it with a monster smash. Sony Pictures' Marvel sequel "No Way Home" grossed an estimated \$52.7 million over the weekend to

bring its three-week total to \$609.9 million. That ranks 10th all-time in North America. Worldwide, it's made \$1.37 billion, a total that puts it above "Black Panther" and makes it the 12th highest grossing film globally.

"No Way Home," Tom Holland's third standalone film as the webslinger, gave a huge lift to the box-office recovery that started in earnest last spring when U.S. cinemas opened after a year of COVID-19 closures. Marvel films dominated the turbulent year, accounting for the top four movies of 2021: "No Way Home," "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings," "Venom: Let There Be Carnage" and "Black Widow."

The North American box office in 2021 amounted to

\$4.5 billion, according to data firm ComScore. That's about 60% down from 2019—back before the days of masked moviegoers, social distancing and virus variants like the currently surging omicron.

Whether the movies will ever reach those pre-pandemic totals again is uncertain, given that exclusive theatrical windows have since shrunk, studios have experimented with hybrid releases and little besides superhero films are packing theaters. Partly due to COVID-19 disruptions, the 2022 release schedule is unusually packed with potential blockbusters, including "The Batman," "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," "Top Gun: Maverick," "Jurassic World: Dominion," "Thor: Love and Thunder" and "Avatar 2."

Maxwell verdict bodes ill for Prince Andrew's civil case

LONDON (AP)—Prince Andrew wasn't on trial in the Ghislaine Maxwell sex trafficking case, but her conviction is bad news for the man who is ninth in line to the British throne.

With the conclusion of the Maxwell case, attention will now turn to a U.S. civil suit in which the plaintiff alleges Maxwell and long-time boyfriend Jeffrey Epstein took her to London, New York and the U.S. Virgin Islands to have sex with Andrew when she was underage.

Andrew denies the allegations, but Wednesday's verdict shows that at least one American jury was willing to believe the young women trafficked by Epstein and Maxwell in a criminal case, where the standard of proof is higher than in civil cases.

"To the extent there's overlap of evidence with respect to

Prince Andrew's case, it certainly doesn't bode well," said Bradley Simon, a former U.S. federal prosecutor who now works as a defense attorney in complex civil cases. "But, as I said, every case hinges on its own

specific facts and the judges will always instruct the jury on that."

Maxwell was convicted Wednesday of sex trafficking and conspiracy charges after a monthlong trial in New York.

While U.S. criminal cases must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt, civil defendants can be ordered to pay financial damages if they are found responsible based on a preponderance of the evidence.

The verdict is problematic for Andrew because he has



Andrew

long been friends with Maxwell, daughter of the late rags-to-riches media tycoon Robert Maxwell. Even after Epstein was charged with sex crimes, Andrew failed to distance himself from her.

Those links have already diminished the prince's standing.

Andrew was forced to give up his duties as a working member of the royal family after a disastrous 2019 interview with the BBC that only increased public concern about his ties to Epstein and Maxwell. The prince was widely criticized for his explanation of why he maintained contact with Epstein after the financier was accused of sexual misconduct and for failing to show empathy for Epstein's victims.

Half-sister's appearance brings back bad memories

DEAR ABBY: A year ago, I was contacted by a half-sister I'll call "Shyla," who my mother placed for adoption at birth. My mother passed away five years ago. She was a horrible mother who physically, verbally and emotionally abused my brother and me. Giving Shyla up was the best thing she ever did. I have spent years in therapy to work through my painful childhood.

Shyla barreled in like a train. I was honest with her about our mother and how I grew up. But Shyla wants me to visit her and video-call her like we are close. When she asks questions about my mother, I'm honest because I refuse to create a person who didn't exist. The woman was a monster.

I do not want a relationship with this sister, or to have to talk about my abuser for the rest of my life. That chapter is closed. Shyla makes me feel horrible because I haven't met her yet. I don't WANT to meet her. Other adoptees I have spoken to chide me on this, saying Shyla "has a right" to her birth family. Advice, please.

FREAKING OUT IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR FREAKING OUT: You have given your half-sister what information you could. Regardless of what "other adoptees" are telling you, you are NOT obligated to have more contact with this half-sister than you are comfortable with. If she asks to meet again, tell her it has taken years of

therapy to get past what was done to you and your brother, and that talking with her is bringing back all of that trauma, which is why you DO NOT WISH TO HAVE FURTHER CONTACT WITH HER. If she persists after that, block her.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 46-year-old widow. My husband of 18 years passed away 14 months ago. My three children from a previous marriage, which ended because of abuse, are adults. Two of them are still in the house, and one, my son "Charlie," has serious health issues. My husband was sick for five years prior to his death.

Charlie gets upset when I talk about being interested in starting to date. He thinks I am going to abandon him again and that I should pay more attention to reconnecting with my children than trying to develop a new relationship. I don't see why I can't have both.

Charlie refuses to leave the house, so taking him out to do things is not an option. I don't think he loves me; I feel he just wants to control me. My other children are supportive, but they are independent. Am I wrong for wanting to pursue life outside my home and grown children?

ATTEMPTING TO GO FORWARD

DEAR ATTEMPTING: You aren't wrong for wanting

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

companionship, and I'm not referring to the kind you can get from your children. If Charlie is unable to live independently and needs constant supervision, you should be discussing options for him such as respite care, so you can have a break.

Because you mentioned that he has serious health issues, what are the plans for him if you should predecease him? This is an issue that should be hashed out before there is a crisis, so there will be no surprises and Charlie can be reassured, which may allay his fears and help him to become less needy.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



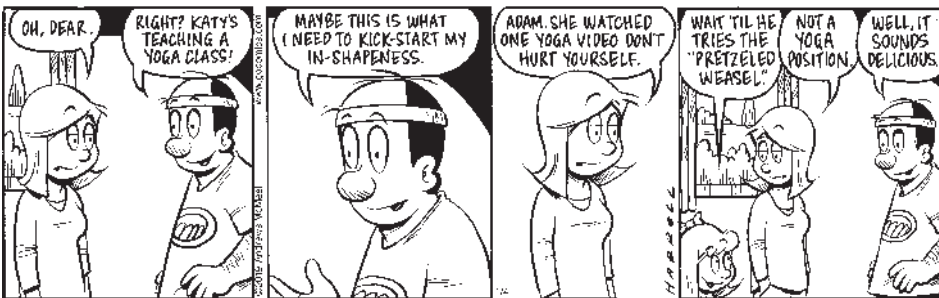
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Essence
5 Sprint
9 Weed whacker
12 Part of a French play
13 Draft status
14 Jackson 5 hit song
15 Bribe of a sort
17 Kanga's kid
18 Hindu hero
19 Mature, as fruit
21 Laugh track sounds
24 Painter Joan
25 "East of Eden" son
26 College life
30 Kitten's cry
31 Nearby
32 USN bigwig
33 Wagered
35 Shade provider

36 Candied veggies
37 Plano's state
38 Recap
40 Wild hog
42 — pro nobis
43 Website assistance features
48 Motorist's org.
49 Biblical grain measure
50 Slugger Sammy
51 Carrier to Amsterdam
52 Sean Astin film
53 Wan

DOWN

1 "How frustrating!"
2 Hosp. section
3 Map lines (Abbr.)
4 Capital of Iran
5 Unhappy destiny
6 Editor
7 Wintour
8 Observe
9 Brother of Groucho
10 Bassoon's kin
11 Nobel Prize subj.
16 More (Sp.)
20 Fury
21 Soccer star Mia
22 Region
23 Cowboy's greeting
24 Sail support
26 Priests' garments
27 Runner Sebastian
28 Notion
29 Iowa city
31 Moth repellent
34 Vichy water
35 Nobel-winning Mother
37 Highland hat
38 Drench
39 Russian river
40 Ran in the wash
41 Nashville venue
44 Outback bird
45 Refusals
46 Show to a seat, slangily
47 Utter

Solution time: 22 mins.

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A	L	P	O	H	E	D	G	E	H	O
R	A	S	P	O	P	I	N	I	O	N
A	Y	E	S	P	A	T	D	I	E	

Yesterday's answer 1-4

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13					14	
15				16					17	
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42				43	44				45	46
48				49					50	
51				52					53	

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Coco Jones, 24; June Diane Raphael, 42; Dave Foley, 59; Michael Stipe, 62.

Happy Birthday: Pay attention to what's happening around you and to the people who truly matter to you. Eliminate what's no longer needed, and simplify your life. It's best to embrace change rather than have it forced upon you. Check out what's trending, and adapt to take advantage of what's available. Put your unique stamp on whatever you do, and move forward with confidence. Your numbers are 8, 14, 17, 25, 36, 39, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): An intellectual attitude will win favors. Reconnect with someone who is always helpful. Your strengths will stand out if you are enthusiastic and positive in the way you deal with others. The experience and knowledge you have will make a difference. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): An emotional situation will cause stress and worry. Do something physical to release tension and clear your head. Being productive will build confidence. Get things done and move to bigger and better opportunities. Put the past behind you. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): There will be a shift in the way you think of the direction you take. Distance yourself from anyone putting pressure on you. Use your intelligence, and choose to do your own thing rather than jeopardize your reputation. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Money, contracts, shared responsibilities and being fair will be necessary if you want to

maintain stability. An unexpected change of plans will require diplomacy. Work alongside others peacefully. Do your part, and move on to something new. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll gravitate toward reliable people, but if you take advantage of them, you will eventually damage your reputation and ability to get the help and support you need to reach your goal. Don't make promises you can't keep. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You'll gain momentum if you channel your energy into what matters to you. What you physically accomplish will make a difference in the end. All talk and no action will make others question your ability to deliver. Finish what you start. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Change and stress go together. Stay centered and think matters through. Don't feel pressured to rush when paying attention to detail and taking your time are required to ensure your success. Follow your heart. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Talk less and do more. Don't waste time discussing trivial matters when productivity is what matters. Live up to your promises, meet your deadlines and be reliable, and you will make a difference. Be part of the solution, not the problem. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Make preparation a priority. Acting in haste will lead to mistakes. Concentrate on mastering what you are doing and producing something that you are proud of when you finish. Baby steps will lead to longevity. Savor every

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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moment of the process. ★★★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Question and assess your life and the changes you want to make. Focus on truth, facts and timing. Your intuition is there to guide you. Trust your gut, and do what you need to do to reach your goal. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Channel your energy into something constructive. Make changes based on needs, not on what someone is doing or wants you to pursue. Fine-tune your skills to suit what's trending, and you'll stay ahead of any competition you encounter. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Be your best, and let others do as they please. More time spent building your brand and less trying to remake someone else will lead to greater rewards and personal satisfaction. If you love someone, don't try to change them. ★★

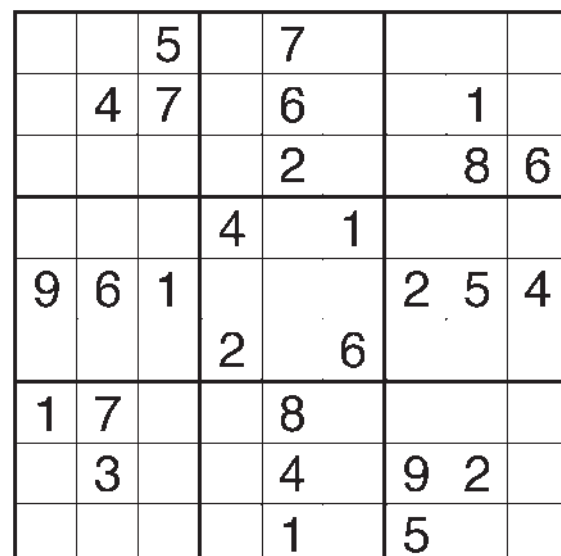
Birthday Baby: You are insightful, spontaneous and energetic. You are original and loving.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



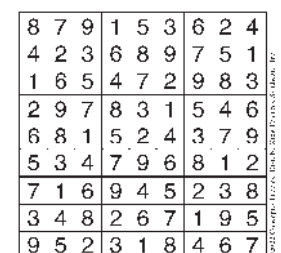
Difficulty Level ★★

1/04

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

A TOKEN OF AMITY

Solution: 7 letters

S T A L E N T E V I T I S O P
U N Y L I M A F I F M L R O G
P A O H O N O R C A A E L O O
P R E I O V R I T P W I O T H
O G C U T P E E O A T D R S A
R O B H G I E N R E W E I E R
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R S T R D A N D L R P A A Q O
E I U S E G I L O M G E E I N
A A R R P S E T O C A D R N Y
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R C T R E A I I C C R E F F O
E U N I T Y R G A T L A D E M
S P R I D E G D E L P R I Z E

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1/4

Accomplish, Accord, Admire, Badge, Bond, Charity, Deal, Earn, Family, Friend, Gift, Good Will, Grant, Harmony, Honor, Hope, League, Love, Mate, Medal, Money, Neighbor, Offer, Order, Pals, Peace, Pledge, Polite, Positive, Praise, Pride, Prize, Quest, Recognition, Respect, Reward, Special, Status, Support, Talent, Treasure, Treat, Trust, Truth, Unity, Victory

Yesterday's Answer: Running

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Bengals beat Chiefs 34-31, stop KC 8-game winning streak



CINCINNATI (AP)—Evan McPherson kicked a 20-yard field goal as time ran out, and the Cincinnati Bengals earned their first AFC North title and postseason appearance in six years with a wild 34-31 win over the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday.

Rookie Ja'Marr Chase had a franchise-record 266 yards receiving and three touchdowns on 11 catches, Joe Burrow threw for 466 yards and four scores while outdueling Patrick Mahomes, and the Bengals rallied from three 14-point deficits against the AFC West champs.

Chase broke Jerry Butler's NFL rookie record set for Buffalo against the Jets with 255 on Sept. 23, 1979.

Kansas City (11-5) had its eight-game winning streak ended and lost the top seed in the AFC to the Titans.

The Bengals' winning drive was filled with drama.

On fourth-and-inches with under a minute left, the Bengals (10-6) went for a touchdown instead of calling on McPherson for a field goal and giving the Chiefs the ball back with a chance to win.

Burrow threw incomplete in the end zone, but Chiefs cornerback L'Jarius Sneed was flagged for illegal use of hands. Backup quarterback Brandon Allen was called on to kneel twice before McPherson came on for the winning kick.

Burrow was outstanding again, completing 30 of 39 attempts. He was sacked four times and hit at least six more times but was as accurate as ever, and Chase caught everything that was thrown near him. Mahomes looked as if he had the game under control early. He threw two first-quarter touchdown passes to give the Chiefs the early lead, but he didn't get another one.

The Chiefs (11-5) led 14-0, 21-7 and 28-14 in the first half. They were ahead 28-17 at halftime before the Bengals began the latest of several second-half surges this season.

A 69-yard TD pass from Burrow to Chase early in the second half cut the Chiefs' lead to 28-24. Kansas City responded with Harrison Butker's 34-yard field goal.

Burrow then hit Tyler Boyd for a 5-yard TD, capping an 86-yard drive that was twice extended by flags on Sneed, including an unnecessary roughness penalty that gave Cincinnati first-and-goal at the Kansas City 7.

Patrick Mahomes was 26 for 35 for 259 yards and threw touchdown passes to Demarcus Robinson. Tight end Travis Kelce, who caught a pass in his 125th straight game.



AP
Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase (1) catches a pass for an 18-yard touchdown as Kansas City Chiefs cornerback Charvarius Ward (35) defends during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, in Cincinnati.

Buccaneers 28, Jets 24

In East Rutherford, N.J., Antonio Brown was kicked off the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after a bizarre, shirtless exit from the field before Tom Brady coolly led the Bucs (12-4) on a 93-yard drive in the final minutes.

Coach Bruce Arians said after the game that Brown was off the team.

"He is no longer a Buc," Arians said.

Brown's meltdown came late in the third quarter with Tampa Bay trailing 24-10. He appeared animated while talking to teammate Mike Evans when he stripped off his pads, jersey, gloves and T-shirt—ossing the gloves and T-shirt into the stands—and walked bare-chested down the sideline and into the end zone. He then waved to fans as HE jogged through the end zone and into the tunnel at MetLife Stadium.

It appeared to be a show of frustration by Brown, who had three catches for 26 yards.

Brown was suspended last month for three games for violating the league's COVID-19 protocols. He also has a history of personal conduct issues and bizarre behavior.

Brady connected with Cameron Brate on a 4-yard touchdown shortly after Brown's exit, and the star quarterback finished the Bucs' rally with a 33-yard touchdown pass to Cyril Grayson with 15 seconds left.

Packers 37, Vikings 10

In Green Bay, Wis., Aaron Rodgers threw two touchdown passes, A.J. Dillon ran for two more scores and Green Bay routed Minnesota to wrap up the NFC's No. 1 playoff seed.

Green Bay's victory, coupled with Philadelphia's 20-16 triumph at Washington earlier in the day, dropped the Vikings (7-9) from postseason contention and gave the

Eagles a playoff berth. The Vikings were playing without quarterback Kirk Cousins after he was placed on the reserve/COVID-19 list Friday.

The Packers (13-3) are the lone NFL team with an unbeaten home record and have a chance to reach the Super Bowl without leaving Lambeau Field. Sunday night's game exemplified the potential advantage the Packers have playing home games in January, as the temperature was 11 degrees with a wind chill of 1 just before kickoff.

Titans 34, Dolphins 3

In Nashville, Tenn., Ryan Tannehill threw two touchdown passes as the Titans clinched their second straight AFC South title, snapping the Dolphins' seven-game winning streak.

The Titans (11-5) won their second straight overall and third in four games to clinch their first back-to-back division titles since the start of the AFL when this franchise was the Houston Oilers and won three straight Eastern Division championships. They also won 11 games for a second consecutive season for the first time since 2002-03—and currently are the AFC's top seed after Kansas City lost at Cincinnati.

Cardinals 25, Cowboys 22

In Arlington, Texas, Kyler Murray threw two touchdown passes to Antoine Wesley. The outcome didn't do much to change the races for the NFC's No. 1 seed or the NFC West, but the Cardinals ended a three-game skid a week after backing into the postseason, and stopped the NFC East champion's four-game winning streak.

Murray improved to 8-0 as a starter at the home of the Cowboys. Most of those victories were as a Texas high school

playoff star, but the past two have been as a pro after last season's 38-10 rout.

Chargers 34, Broncos 3

In Inglewood, Calif., Justin Herbert threw for two touchdowns and set the franchise single-season record, while Andre Roberts returned a kick 101 yards for a score.

Los Angeles (9-7) is in the final wild-card spot but needs a win at Las Vegas next week to wrap up its first postseason berth since 2018. The Colts, Chargers and Raiders all have the same record, but the Chargers currently hold the tiebreaker over Las Vegas after their 28-14 victory on Oct. 4.

49ers 23, Texans 7

In Santa Clara, Calif., rookie Trey Lance threw two touchdowns passes in the second half of his second career start, and the 49ers closed in on a playoff berth.

Lance got the nod for the 49ers (9-7) for the first time since Week 5 with Jimmy Garoppolo sidelined by a thumb injury and overcame an interception in the first half to lead San Francisco to the win. The Niners can clinch their second playoff berth in five seasons under coach Kyle Shanahan with a loss by New Orleans or a win next week against the Rams.

Bills 29, Falcons 15

In Orchard Park, N.Y., Buffalo clinched a playoff berth when Devin Singletary scored two touchdowns rushing in the second half to make up for Josh Allen's sloppiness.

The AFC East-leading Bills rallied to clinch their third consecutive playoff spot. Buffalo (10-6) did so by beating the Falcons, coupled with the Baltimore Ravens' 20-19 loss to the Los Angeles Rams.

Raiders 23, Colts 20

In Indianapolis, Derek Carr directed Las Vegas to Daniel Carlson's winning 33-yard field goal as time expired as the Raiders beat Jonathan Taylor and the Colts 23-20 to move one step closer to an AFC wild card.

After Michael Badgley kicked a tying 41-yard field goal for Indianapolis with 1:56 left, Carr and the Raiders got the ball at their 25. Carr found Hunter Renfrow for 24 yards on third-and-10 in the final minute, setting the stage for Carlson's third field goal of the game.

Carr passed for 255 yards and a touchdown for Las Vegas (9-7), and Zay Jones had eight receptions for 120 yards.

Patriots 50, Jaguars 10

In Foxborough, Mass., New England returned to the playoffs when rookie quarterback Mac Jones threw three touchdown passes and Damien Harris and Rhamondre Stevenson rushed for two scores apiece.

The victory by the Patriots (10-6) snapped a two-game losing streak and gave Bill Belichick his 20th 10-win season as a head coach, tying Don Shula for the most in NFL history. A loss by Miami at Tennessee secured New England's first trip to the postseason since Tom Brady left for Tampa Bay following the 2019 season.

Eagles 20, Washington 16

In Landover, Md., Jalen Hurts scrambled out of trouble while showing no ill effects from a recent ankle injury, Boston Scott rushed for two touchdowns, and the Eagles beat Washington, clinching a playoff berth several hours later when Minnesota lost to Green Bay.

Hurts ran six times for 45 yards and was 17 of 26 passing for 214 yards in leading the Eagles to a fourth consecu-

tive victory. Philadelphia (9-7) started slowly yet again, and its league-leading rushing attack was held to a season-low 3.4 yards a carry with Miles Sanders out because of a broken left hand. Twelve days after racking up 238 yards on the ground against Washington (6-10), the Eagles had 119 yards rushing.

Rams 20, Ravens 19

In Baltimore, Matthew Stafford shook off three turnovers to guide a fourth-quarter rally that carried the Rams to their fifth straight victory.

Stafford threw a 7-yard touchdown pass to Odell Beckham Jr. with 57 seconds left immediately after completing a 5-yarder to Beckham on a fourth-and-5. After Los Angeles failed on a 2-point conversion, the Ravens—playing a third straight game without injured quarterback Lamar Jackson—never got close enough for a field-goal try.

Saints 18, Panthers 10

In New Orleans, Alvin Kamara turned a short pass into New Orleans' first touchdown in more than 11 quarters, Brett Maher kicked four field goals, and the Saints' defense was dominant.

The third victory in four games for the Saints (8-8)—just their second triumph in the Superdome in their regular-season home finale—assured New Orleans would head into the final week of the regular season still in the hunt for an NFC wild-card spot.

Seahawks 51, Lions 29

In Seattle, Rashaad Penny rushed for a career-high 170 yards and two touchdowns, Russell Wilson threw three of his four TD passes to DK Metcalf. Seattle (6-10) closed out its home schedule with its most impressive offensive showing of the season, raising questions about where those fireworks have been for most of the disappointing year.

Penny rumbled for 144 yards in the first half, while Wilson threw TD passes to Metcalf and Tyler Lockett as Seattle built a 31-7 halftime lead.

Bears 29, Giants 3

In Chicago, Robert Quinn broke Hall of Famer Richard Dent's franchise single-season record with his 18th sack. Trevis Gipson added a career-high two sacks, and the Bears joined Green Bay as the only franchises with 800 victories counting the postseason. They also gave the embattled Matt Nagy a win in what might have been his final home game as their coach.

Quinn broke Dent's mark of 17 1/2 set in 1984 when he took down Mike Glennon in the fourth quarter.

Brown scores 50, rallies Celts to 116-111 OT win over Magic



BOSTON (AP)—Jaylen Brown scored a career-high 50 points, rallying the Boston Celtics from 14 points down late in the fourth quarter to a 116-111 overtime victory over the Orlando Magic on Sunday night.

Brown scored 21 in the fourth quarter, then opened OT with his fifth 3-pointer of the game. Brown, whose previous career high was 46 against the Knicks on Oct. 20, also finished with 11 rebounds as the Celtics avoided losing for the fourth time in five games.

"We needed to win. No way we could have lost this game. It wouldn't have been good," said Brown, who made nine of 12 shots in the fourth quarter while leading the Celtics on a frenzied comeback.

Marcus Smart added 17 points, seven assists and seven rebounds for the Celtics, who needed an 11-2 run down the stretch to force overtime. Dennis Schroder had 21 points and seven assists.

"We let the game come to us," Smart said. "It wasn't pretty. It was a little ugly. But we came out with the win and that's because we kept our composure and we kept with it."

Terrence Ross scored 33 for the Magic, who outscored Boston 35-20 in the third quarter. They closed the period on a 20-4 run to take a 77-65 lead into the fourth and were ahead 96-82 with a little more than 4 minutes remaining in regulation.

"Everybody was just going extreme tonight. We were playing with a lot of energy, a lot of hustle," Ross said. "Any time you play like that, you're going to give yourself a good chance."

Shortly after missing the free throw on a three-point play attempt with 1:40 left, Brown drove for a layup to tie it at 98-all with 38 seconds to go. He added another layup that briefly put Boston up 100-98 with 30 seconds remaining, but Tim Frazier tied it up again and the game was decided in overtime.

"We've just got to shake it off and learn from the situations that we were in, because we'll find ourselves in more of these as the year goes on," Orlando coach Jamahl Mosley said.

Boston, which beat one of the top teams in the league Friday with a 123-108 win over Phoenix, couldn't stop the lowly Magic (8-29) two days later.

Both teams were without their top scorers. Cole Anthony was out for the Magic with a sprained right ankle and Boston's Jayson Tatum missed his fourth straight game after being placed on the COVID-19 health and safety protocols list last week.

Gary Harris added 23 points and Wendell Carter Jr. fin-



AP
Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown (7) drives the basket against Orlando Magic center Wendell Carter Jr. (34) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, in Boston.

ished with 15 points and 16 rebounds for Orlando. Frazier, who also scored 11 in the third, finished with 14 points.

The Celtics led 45-42 at halftime despite committing 14 turnovers in the first half and nearly letting a 14-point lead vanish before the break. Frazier opened the third quarter with a 3-pointer to tie it, starting the Magic on a roll that would put them up by as much as 14.

"We got a little careless there. We were playing really fast and a little reckless at times and let them get back into the game, but overall we showed growth," Boston coach Ime Udoka said. "We've lost quite a few of those this year and got out there defensively and got what we wanted towards the

end of the game."

Brown said he wasn't aware he was headed toward a career night, too caught up in the pace of the rally to realize how much he had scored until the final minute.

Brown is the seventh player in team history to score 50 and the fourth Celtic to reach 50 points and 10 or more rebounds in a game, joining Tatum, Larry Bird and Kevin McHale.

"My teammates found me tonight and I knocked some shots down," Brown said.

Suns 133, Hornets 99

In Charlotte, N.C., Devin Booker scored 24 points, Jalen Smith tied a career high with 19 points and 12 rebounds and short-handed Phoenix hampered Charlotte.

Chris Paul had 16 assists to help the Suns improve to 28-8—a half-game behind Golden State for the NBA lead—after they lost three of their previous four.

The Suns got 11 points and six rebounds from Bismack Biyombo, who signed a 10-day contract Saturday with four Phoenix players in the NBA's health and safety protocols, including starting center Deandre Ayton, starting forward Jae Crowder and backup center JaVale McGee. Coach Monty Williams also is out.

Landry Shamet added 17 points, Mikal Bridges had 15, and Cam Johnson and Cam Payne 14 each.

LaMelo Ball had 17 points for the Hornets.

Lakers 108, Timberwolves 103

In Los Angeles, LeBron James scored 26 points, Malik Monk added 22 and Los Angeles beat Minnesota for the first time in three meetings this season.

Russell Westbrook had 20 points, three rebounds and five assists.

Naz Reid led the Timberwolves with season highs of 23 points, making 10 of 17 from the floor, and 11 rebounds. Jaylen Nowell added 17 points.

Mavericks 95, Thunder 86

In Oklahoma City, Luka Dončić had 14 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds in his return from a 10-game absence, Marquese Criss scored a season-high 15 points and Dallas beat

Oklahoma City.

Dončić played with a long brace on his left knee and saw just over 31 minutes in his first game in 23 days. He was content with setting up teammates for baskets after missing five games with ankle soreness and five more games due to virus health and safety protocols.

Criss, on his second 10-day contract after joining the Mavericks on Dec. 21, shot 6 of 9 from the field, including three 3-pointers, and had seven rebounds.

Oklahoma City's Josh Giddey, back after three games in the health and safety protocols, had 17 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds for his first triple-double. He's the youngest NBA player to have a triple-double at 19 years, 2 months, 23 days.

Raptors 120, Knicks 105

In Toronto, Fred VanVleet scored 19 of his season-high 35 points in the third quarter, Pascal Siakam had 20 points and 14 rebounds and Toronto extended its home winning streak against New York to 11 games.

Evan Fournier led the depleted Knicks with 20 points. RJ Barrett and Obi Toppin each had 19.

The Raptors played before a mostly empty arena for the second straight game after Ontario's provincial government reduced capacity limits to a maximum of 1,000 people in an attempt to control the spread of COVID-19. No tickets were sold, and only friends and family were allowed entry.

Cavaliers 108, Pacers 104

In Cleveland, rookie Evan Mobley had 24 points and nine rebounds, Kevin Love scored 20 points and Cleveland beat Indiana to snap a three-game losing streak.

Jarrett Allen scored 18 points and Lamar Stevens added a season-high 15 for Cleveland, which trailed 84-73 in the third quarter before going on a 17-0 run to take the lead for good.

Domantas Sabonis had 32 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists for the Pacers. Indiana has dropped four straight overall and hasn't won on the road since Nov. 22 in Chicago.

Kings 115, Heat 113

In Sacramento, Calif., De'Aaron Fox scored 11 of his 24 points over the final six minutes, including two free throws with 6.2 seconds left, and Sacramento ended Miami's five-game winning streak.

Buddy Hield added 26 points, and Damian Jones had 18 points and 10 rebounds.

Tyler Herro and Omer Yurtseven had 22 points apiece for Miami. Kyle Lowry added 14 points and 12 assists.

NBA calls up 4th G League ref; Hawks' McMillan in protocols

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Another G League referee was called up by the NBA to work a game on Saturday and another head coach entered the league's health and safety protocols, on a day where the number of players on the list dropped considerably.

RefSha'Rae Mitchell was assigned the San Antonio-Detroit game. She becomes the fourth G League referee called up in a span of two days—three others worked games on Friday—and is now the 15th woman in league history picked to work a regular-season game.

But there were signs that the league may be starting a return to normalcy. By Saturday evening, the number of players in the protocols had dropped back below the 100 mark after rising to around 125 earlier in the week.

A significant number of

head coaches, however, remain unable to be at games: Atlanta's Nate McMillan went into the protocols Saturday, the eighth head coach currently on that list and the 11th to deal with a virus-related issue already this season.

Los Angeles Lakers coach Frank Vogel rejoined his team Friday after a six-game absence and said it was a strain both mentally and physically.

"It's something I really never want to do again," Vogel said.

The Hawks took six of what had been their league-high 12 players in protocols off the list Saturday, including Kevin Huerter and Danilo Gallinari.

Among the big names coming off the list Saturday: Dallas' Luka Dončić, who hasn't played since Dec. 10—a 10-game absence so far, five with ankle issues and the last five after being put into

the protocols.

Dončić is in line now to return Sunday against Oklahoma City. The Thunder placed their leading scorer, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, on the protocols list Saturday.

The NBA has changed its protocols at least twice in recent days after data suggested it could safely shorten the return-to-play plans for those who test positive for the virus, provided that the players are asymptomatic and return multiple test results that meet the league's standards for showing they are no longer contagious.

And it's likely no coincidence that players are now out of the protocols a bit earlier than teams originally anticipated.

"This landscape has been changing pretty consistently for the last two years," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said of the league's latest changes to the protocols and the prospects

of getting players back more quickly. "In the last month or so, you're just seeing more and more vaccinated, boosted players who are asymptomatic who are sitting out an inordinate amount of time. I think this is a good solution now. It's a good step forward."

Mitchell has worked in the G League since 2018. Her call-up came as the NBA's referee corps continues dealing with several officials who have either virus-related issues or injuries. So the refs, like most teams, have looked to the G League for help.

Largely because of G League callups, NBA teams saw 544 players get into at least one game in December alone, the most for any month—and any previous season—in league history. The single-season mark entering this year was 540, set last season; the NBA's total this season entering Saturday was 567.

Lockout hurts Braves' chance to cash in on championship

CHICAGO (AP)—World Series champions for the first time in 26 years, the Atlanta Braves were all set to cash in.

With young stars like Ronald Acuña Jr., to go along with a swanky ballpark and surrounding entertainment district, they had everything in place.

Then a storm rolled in, and

they had to pull a tarp over some of their party plans

Perhaps no team was hurt more than Atlanta when Major League Baseball locked out its players on Dec. 2. The move put the start of the 2022 season in jeopardy and scrubbed Acuña and company from the Braves' business plans—for now.

The afterglow of a championship, especially the end of a drought like the one Atlanta experienced, is traditionally quite lucrative for teams, going beyond merchandise and ticket sales to strengthening relationships with partners and finalizing new sponsorship deals. But baseball's labor strife increases the difficulty for the Braves when it comes to making the most of the opportunity.

"A lot of it is kind of using that moment to grow your fan base and just elevate the way people think about your organization and perceive it," said Brian Gainor, the vice president of innovation for 4FRONT, a sports marketing firm.

Messages were left by the AP seeking comment from At-



Atlanta Braves' Ronald Acuña Jr. runs to first base after hitting a double during the fifth inning of the team's baseball game against the Philadelphia Phillies on Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2019, in Atlanta. AP

lanta. There was no response, but the franchise has been keeping some heady company since the final out of its fourth World Series title.

The Braves hosted Chelsea FC from soccer's Premier League in a meeting of

champions in early December. Mascots from each club palled around on the field at Truist Park and posed for pictures with The Commissioner's Trophy and Chelsea's 2021 Champions League trophy.

"Wouldn't have been a trip

to Atlanta without visiting the champs," Chelsea FC tweeted from its U.S. account.

It was a savvy business connection for each club. Chelsea has more than 100 million followers combined on its social media channels, while Atlanta

has a multistate following in the U.S.—particularly in the South—that dates to the days when its games were broadcast on TBS.

The stop was part of a tour for the Champions League trophy that also included "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," New York's Empire State Building, a Chicago Bulls home game and Space Center Houston—part of Chelsea's effort to turn its title into substantive business growth.

"U.S. fans love winners. They love U.S. winners. They love international winners. Same with international fans," Gainor said. "So it really is the best opportunity you're ever going to have to capture the attention of fans around the world, but you've got to have a plan there to monetize those fans."

The best teams start planning for championships long before they win it all, Gainor said, and they take a multiyear approach that rallies every part of the organization to the effort. Communication, both internally and externally, also is key.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	23	11	.676	—
Philadelphia	19	16	.543	4½
Boston	18	19	.486	6½
Toronto	16	17	.485	6½
New York	17	20	.459	7½

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	23	14	.622	—
Charlotte	19	18	.514	4
Washington	18	18	.500	4½
Atlanta	16	19	.457	6
Orlando	7	30	.189	16

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	24	10	.706	—
Milwaukee	25	13	.658	1
Cleveland	21	16	.568	4½
Indiana	14	23	.378	11½
Detroit	6	28	.176	18

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	23	14	.622	—
Dallas	18	18	.500	4½
San Antonio	14	21	.400	8
New Orleans	13	23	.361	9½
Houston	10	27	.270	13

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	26	10	.722	—
Denver	18	16	.529	7
Minnesota	16	20	.444	10
Portland	13	22	.371	12½
Oklahoma City	13	23	.361	13

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	28	7	.800	—
Phoenix	28	8	.778	½
L.A. Clippers	19	18	.514	10
L.A. Lakers	19	19	.500	10½
Sacramento	16	22	.421	13½

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Buffalo	10	6	0	.625	456	279
x-New England	10	6	0	.625	438	270
e-Miami	8	8	0	.500	308	349
e-N.Y. Jets	4	12	0	.250	300	477

South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Tennessee	11	5	0	.688	391	329
Indianapolis	9	7	0	.563	440	339
e-Houston	4	12	0	.250	255	424
e-Jacksonville	2	14	0	.125	227	446

North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Cincinnati	10	6	0	.625	444	355
Pittsburgh	7	7	1	.500	301	371
Baltimore	8	8	0	.500	374	376
e-Cleveland	7	8	0	.467	314	329

West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Kansas City	11	5	0	.688	452	340
L.A. Chargers	9	7	0	.563	442	424
Las Vegas	9	7	0	.563	339	407
Denver	7	9	0	.438	311	294

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Dallas	11	5	0	.688	479	332
x-Philadelphia	9	7	0	.563	418	334
e-Washington	6	10	0	.375	313	427
e-N.Y. Giants	4	12	0	.250	251	394

South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Tampa Bay	12	4	0	.750	470	336
New Orleans	8	8	0	.500	334	315
e-Atlanta	7	9	0	.438	293	429
e-Carolina	5	11	0	.313	287	363

North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
*Green Bay	13	3	0	.813	420	334
e-Minnesota	7	9	0	.438	394	409
e-Chicago	6	10	0	.375	294	376
e-Detroit	2	13	1	.156	288	437

West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-L.A. Rams	12	4	0	.750	436	345
x-Arizona	11	5	0	.688	419	328
San Francisco	9	7	0	.563	400	341
e-Seattle	6	10	0	.375	357	336

e-Eliminated from playoffs
x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division
*clinched home-field advantage
BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SWIMMERS

From Page 20

team, the Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center coach said like Tenorio and Suzuki, Asaka and Shoko Litulumar also performed well and set personal best times in the events they swam in.

"First, all member broke their personal best time. Updating personal best time is mandatory for the team because their personal best time was performed more than two years ago. All also promised to further improve as well as share their experience from the short course meet," he said.

In particular, Kimura said Asaka's 50m freestyle time is faster than Taeyanna Adams of Pohnpei's gold medal swim of 30.26 in the 2019 Micronesia Swimming Championships.

He added that Shoko's 50m backstroke was also faster than the 34.25 set by no less than her teammate, Aika Watanabe, in the 2019 Micronesia Swimming Championships.

"Shoko's time is faster



Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio and Asaka and Shoko Litulumar ride camels at the Liwa Desert after taking part in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championship in Abu Dhabi. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

than the Federated States of Micronesia national record," he added.

Kimura said with or without an official pool he believes these four swimmers and the rest of yhe CNMI's up-and-

coming swimmers can still improve with the proper training and attitude.

"As I said repeatedly, there is no relationship between good facility and improvement. However, the average

level of younger swimmers can be brought up with training at an official pool. It means that it will lead to raising the total swimmer's level."

Overall, Kimura said the level of swimming in the CNMI

BACHANI

From Page 20

at the halfway point I kind of

sprinted," she said.

Run Saipan's Dele Cruz congratulated the winners and all the participants of the Inau-

gural 1 Mile Road Race and promised they will bring back the competition next year.

"Please congratulate our

kids for their hard work. They set the course record for their division. This is the standards to strive for to beat next year's

record for the 1 Mile Road Race from 2022. Congratulations students and well done for making history!" he said.

SIS

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Serin Chung, who along with Jimin Woon are the co-ordinators of the tournament, said the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament is being held to fundraise for Saipan International School's Student Council.

She added that they've been fortunate that they've been able

to hold the tournament last year as there was no local transmission of COVID-19 at that time.

"The tournament has not been absent since the last time the tournament happened as COVID-19 was not spreading on the island. For the upcoming SIS tournament, we will be careful and do our best to keep everyone safe," she said.

To this end, Chung and Woo has made it manda-

tory that all participants and spectators to strictly practice social distancing and wear masks at all times (except when playing, of course).

Chung is also crossing her fingers that they will have a respectable turnout again this year.

"The last time we had the SIS tournament, we had over 70 players, but this year we are not so sure how many people to ex-

pect because of COVID-19."

Deadline to submit entries is at 6pm this Friday, Jan. 7. Entry fee is \$20 for singles, \$15 per person for doubles, and \$10 for mini tennis.

For more information about the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament, call Chung at (670) 788-7400 or email her at serin.c.2006@gmail.com. You can also call Woo at (670) 285-7300/ 783-7500

(whatsapp) or email him at jimin06132004@gmail.com.

The 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament is being sanctioned by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

Entries can be submitted at the SIS office (from Jan. 3 to 7, 9am-1pm) or personally to NMITA president Jeff Race or tournament coordinators Chung or Woo.



**Lockout hurts
Braves' chance
to cash in on
championship**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Bengals beat
Chiefs 34-31,
stop KC 8-game
winning streak**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Swimmers set sights for Fukuoka

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Fresh from their first international competition in years, the CNMI National Swimming Team will now be training its sights on the 19th FINA World Championships 2022 in Fukuoka, Japan in May 2022.

Specifically, CNMI national swimming coach Hiroyuki Kimura said Juhn Tenorio and Jinnosuke Suzuki are ready to take the next leap in the long course meet set from May 13 to 29 in the Land of the Rising Sun.



“Juhn’s time and Jinnosuke’s time are so amazing. But it’s not so surprising because their target is to go A-Final in the bigger regional championships than the Micronesian Games. It’s like the Pacific Games or Oceania Championships! This two boys are already aiming to improve their

times in the 19th FINA World Championships 2022.”

Kimura said Tenorio and Suzuki’s performances in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championship held from Dec.



16 to 21 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates were simply spectacular.

“Juhn’s 50m freestyle and 100m backstroke is faster than CNMI national record time. Jinnosuke’s 100m freestyle and 200m freestyle is faster than the CNMI 15-16 age group record,” he said.

As for the rest of the CNMI See **SWIMMERS on Page 19**



From left, Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio and Asaka and Shoko Litulumar play tourist at the Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi after taking part in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championship. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bachani, Cabrera are top junior 1-milers

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Dev Bachani and Tiana Cabrera affirmed their reputation as the fastest under-18 runners in the CNMI after topping Run Saipan’s Inaugural 1 Mile Road Race held last Friday from the World War II Tank Memorial along Quartermaster Road to just before the Oleai Beach Bar & Grill in Oleai.

Bachani, the 15-year-old recent commit of Park University in Gilbert, Arizona, won the boys U18 division with a second overall best time of 5:18—only open champion and former Division III runner Keith Ketola’s 4:45 was faster.

Coming in second to the Marianas High School student is Bachani’s schoolmate, Cody Shimizu, who crossed the finish line in 5:29. Agape Christian School’s Jason Cao completed the Top 3 in 5:44.

Bachani said the Inaugural 1 Mile Road Race was a unique and fun race.

“This is actually a good race. I liked it because it’s a different competition and everyone was pacing really



Bachani

fast...everyone’s sprinting,” he said.

The NMI Boys U18 National Team left back said he didn’t lead the race from start to finish and only decided to turn on the jets at the latter part of the run.

“I was third place and then I caught up with the first and



Cabrera

second place and I just kept my pace. It feels good to win the 1-mile race.”

Cabrera, meanwhile, almost missed the race much less finish first after she mistook the finish line as the starting line.

“I woke up late because I didn’t really sleep well last night. I was really excited.

I thought the start was here (near the Oleai Beach Bar & Grill) because I saw Edward (Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr.). Then I said ‘wait, why is he here?’ and I asked someone and he said ‘it’s the finish line’ so I drove to the starting line,” she said.

Thankfully, Cabrera still had time to drive to the World War II Tank Memorial and completed the run in 6:42. She was followed by a couple of ACS runners—Eunice Xu and Emma Pang—who came in at 7:00 and 7:04, respectively.

Like Bachani, Cabrera thoroughly enjoyed the Inaugural 1 Mile Road Race.

“The run was really good. My first time to run the 1-mile but I did other distances in track and field training. I’m kind of happy now because this is now my new favorite event. It’s easy and it was fast... boom and you’re done.”

The Saipan International School junior said she started the race conservatively by letting Xu and Pang pace the course.

“My strategy was just to follow the [ACS] girls and just kind of warmup a little bit and

See **BACHANI on Page 19**



The American Memorial Park tennis courts will be the venue for the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament set from Jan. 15 to 17. MARK RABAGO

SIS tennis tourney set Jan. 15

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



The 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament will be held from Jan. 15 to 17 at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

A total of 14 division will be up for grabs in the annual tournament, including men’s and women’s singles open, boys singles 16U, 14U, 12U, girls singles 16U, 14U, and 12U, U12 mixed doubles, U18 mixed doubles, mixed doubles 5.0, 4.0, 3.0, and Unisex 10U mini tennis.

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